

A LOOK BACK AT 15 YEARS OF BOUNDARY-PUSHING MUSIC, ART, AND STYLE

# XLR8R

117  
MAY  
2008

ACCELERATING MUSIC & CULTURE  
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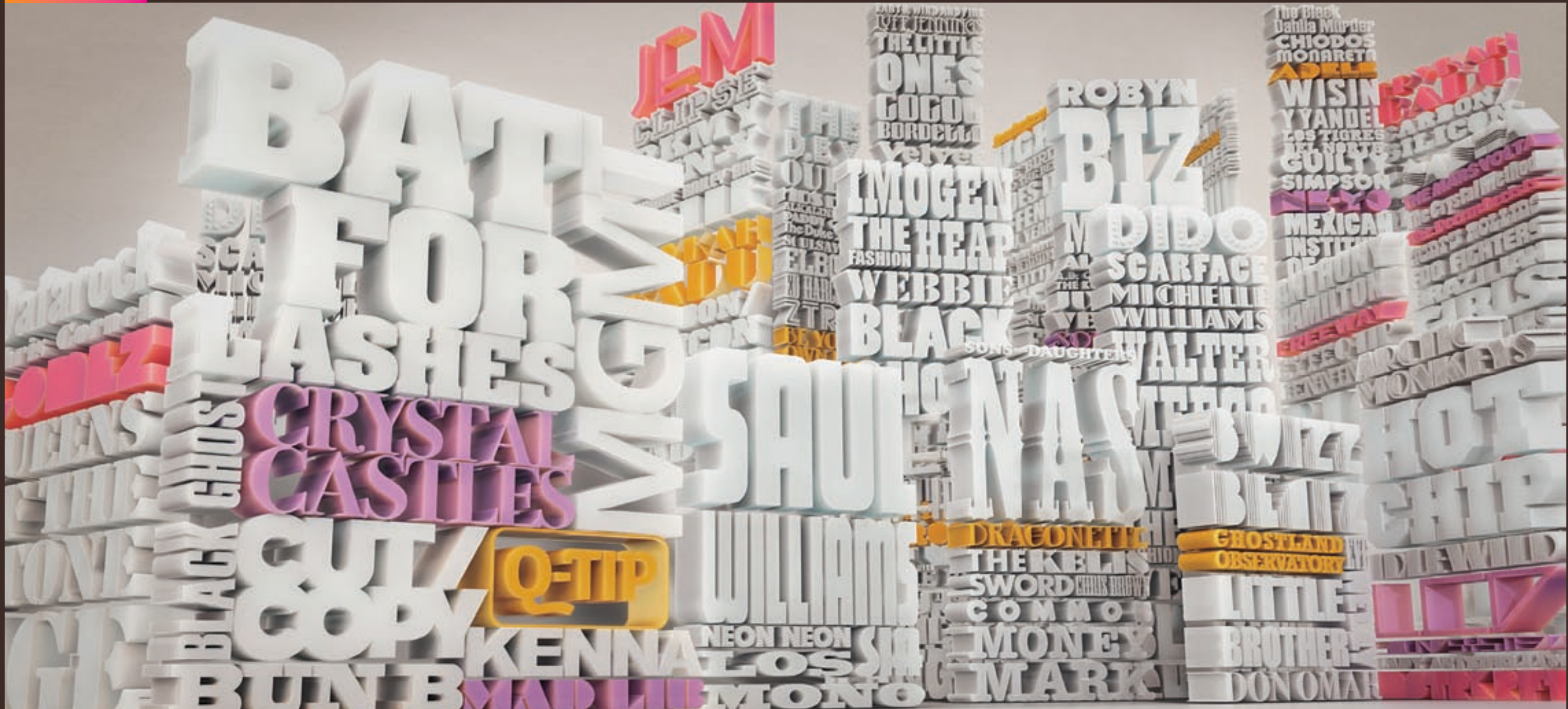


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BY JIM MAHFOOD



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WHY?'S YONI WOLF, PHOTOGRAPHED IN OAKLAND BY MATHEW SCOTT

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MADE OF JAPAN  
Onitsuka  
Tiger



## Ed's Rant: **SLEEPLESS IN SAN FRANCISCO**



March cover stars Plastician and Benga goof off with editor Vivian Host at WMC 2008, Miami.

Even with a job as cool as this, there are *those* days. The ones where you spend two hours sitting at the computer without typing one decent sentence, where no matter how many espressos you've had you can't work fast enough, where despite having a stack of 200 CDs on your desk you are not feeling any new music. And you just have to work through it. Take Foxy for a walk, dress up in the Altern 8-style hazmat suit we've kept in the front office for the last 10 years—or maybe put on Modeselektor's *Happy Birthday* and dance around Brianna's office with a giant Mac Dre sneaker on your foot.

Eventually, when you've struggled hard enough, your brain is half-melted, and you're one cheesesteak away from being committed, the good stuff comes. You suddenly know exactly what you're going to do for the next issue, or someone puts on a record that blows your mind. Lots of times, things turn around when someone turns in something good, or funny, or inspiring. Several droll hours followed after reading Ryan Rayhill's piece on the *Grand Theft Auto* franchise, wherein he wrote that a scene from *San Andreas* gives him "a particularly tingly boner." Not to be outdone for best sentence of the issue, Andrew Parks—in his exploration of the birth and death of electronica—has penned perhaps one of the best quips we've ever printed about Moby. (I won't spoil it for you; read it for yourself on page 40.)

Moby appears a few times in this issue, which is fitting for our 15-year anniversary. Over the years, we've loved him, we've loathed him, and Bitter Bastard has certainly had a field day making fun of him. Indeed, his career is an interesting mirror of electronic music in the U.S. as it's gone from renegade underground culture to "next big thing" to near arena-

rock style raves and concerts and now back to the clubs, where Ed Banger is nearly as accepted by the weekend-warrior crowd as Rihanna and Soulja Boy.

*XLR8R*, which came to life in 1993, has been here from the jump, chronicling the ups and the downs, the bombast and the beef, the technology and trickery that has made electronic music so thrilling. With bruised eardrums, we've covered what's exciting us in hip-hop and rock, and traveled all around to bring you the scoop on dozens of even yet-to-be-named sounds and sights. The sleepless nights spent making this magazine—and our website, TV show, podcasts, special projects, etcetera—have been (mostly) worth it... and, you know, we probably wouldn't have been sleeping anyway.

So with particularly tingly boners, we are very proud to present you our special 15-year anniversary issue, one that contains a look back at some favorite times in our history and, as always, lots of looking forward.

- Vivian Host, Editor



Editor Vivian Host started writing drum & bass record reviews for *XLR8R* when she was 18 years old. Her first issue as editor was January/February 2005, following in the footsteps of Tomas Palermo, who gave her one of her first DJ gigs at the age of 15.

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### ON THE COVER

Exclusive painting by Maya Hayuk for *XLR8R*'s 15-Year Anniversary

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## Contributors



### Tony Ware

Southern by the grace of God, but now based around DC, Tony Ware proves you can take the boy out of Georgia but not Georgia out of the boy. When not lamenting the absence of Waffle House, Tony trades snaps with a five-year-old, flails at *Guitar Hero*, geeks out on headphone frequency ranges, and scripts his bleeps and bloopers. An *XLR8R* contributor since 2000, Tony waxes rhapsodic on Jennifer Cardini's and Ellen Allien's new mix discs in this issue's reviews section.



### Shaniqwa Jarvis

NYC native Shaniqwa Jarvis is a swift-moving animal with a penchant for brains, fashion, and libertine humor. When she's not hustling the bi-coastal life, she can be spotted shooting for *Teen Vogue*, *Flaunt*, *i-D*, *Theme*, and MTV. She photographed this month's fashion shoot with stylish clubgoers she found at the Punky Reggae party at L.A. club La Cita. Keep your eye out for her small, yet large, self-published book, which drops in the near future. [shaniqwajarvis.com](http://shaniqwajarvis.com)



### Matthew Ingram

Matthew Ingram—who has written for *The Wire*, *New York Press*, and *Fact*—began blogging when his father passed away in 2003. Quickly, his Woebot site became a favorite of ours with its insightful posts on everything from screw music to grime to cosmic to jazz, its archives of classic record covers, and its unmistakably British tone. Ingram quit posting on Woebot this January, but he was kind enough to let us reprint his interview with Suburban Base cover designer Dave Nodz in this issue. [woebot.com](http://woebot.com)



### Frances Reade

*XLR8R* copy editor Frances Reade is an S.F.-based writer, music nerd, and grammar spaz who left Detroit several years ago in the hope that someone in California might pay her in exchange for these "skills." She's been severing dangling participles here for almost two years, and wishes to thank DJ (rupture, Sunn O))), Adult., and !!! for all the interesting grammatical and stylistic challenges they've provided. In her spare time, Frances enjoys vintage mopeds, peppermint milkshakes, and the television program *Animal Cops: Detroit*.

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## Contributors: **Maya Hayuk**



Photos by Libby Werbel in front of a collaboration with Kyle Ranson at Halala Gallery in Barcelona



When we got in touch with Brooklyn-based painter [Maya Hayuk](#) about designing our 15-year anniversary cover, it was as if the universe spoke to her. She was in the middle of curating a group exhibit in Brussels, and would be rushing off to Spain for another show one week later, but we shared a vibe with her (one that we've shared so many times before) about bold shapes and color, and she couldn't refuse the muse. Her final design (shown here) is based on the Roman numerals XV, a reference to *XLR8R*'s 15-year anniversary, overlapping one another.

Hayuk has a deep spirituality to her work, and her life in general. She believes in feeling good and making a positive impact with her art, which goes back as far as her Baltimore childhood, when she appeared in John Waters' original *Hairspray*. She loves collaboration (from her early days with the Clarion Alley Mural Project in San Francisco, where she resided from 1991-2001, to her work with Barnstormers in New York) and music (from designing album art to photographing musicians), which both play a strong role in the art that she produces. It is no wonder this hard-working artist has been such a strong voice in *XLR8R* over the years.

Here are some highlights of her contributions to the magazine, beginning February 2002 and culminating in this issue's cover. *Brianna Pope*

[mayahayuk.com](http://mayahayuk.com)



**ISSUE 80:** September 2004  
Hayuk has photographed many artists for *XLR8R*, including Savath & Savalas, Prince Po, Akrobatik, Prefuse 73, Blockhead, Dangermouse, and Bonnie "Prince" Billy and Tortoise. Recalling her obsession with comedian David Cross in issue #65, we asked Hayuk to photograph him for our political issue (#80), and she was very happy to oblige. To read the complete article, go to [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).



**ISSUE 65:** March 2003  
Hayuk was one of eight people around the world who were asked to be a part of our special section on the state of graffiti and public art. She contributed six original panels—mostly abstract designs, but the standout was a painting of comedian David Cross.



**ISSUE 56:** February 2002  
Hayuk interviewed Banksy for our first-ever edition of the Vis-Ed series. She also contributed an original painting of George W. Bush and the "first dog" for the TBC page, an examination of paranoia in a fear-based modern world.



**ISSUE 90:** September 2005  
Hayuk designed a sneaker for Triple 5 Soul, which was featured in our "Got To Have It" Elements section.



**ISSUE 86:** April 2005  
The tables were turned as Hayuk was the featured artist in the Vis-Ed section. Now things really have come full-circle. To read the complete article, go to [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).



**XLR8R TV #26:** September 18, 2007  
Hayuk is featured setting up for her solo exhibit, *Forever*, at Upper Playground's Fifty24 SF Gallery in San Francisco. [XLR8R.com/tv/26](http://XLR8R.com/tv/26)

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## Letters to the Editor

Got something to say? Love us? Hate us? Write us at [letterbox@xlr8r.com](mailto:letterbox@xlr8r.com) or send mail to XLR8R Magazine, 1388 Haight Street #105, San Francisco, CA 94117.



March Issue #115

April Issue #116

### Hipster Hornballs

My best friend and I just moved to L.A. from Austin, TX and we were wondering if you could give those cuties from Health a little message from us. *Hey boys, we've got some C&C for ya. We'll be chillin' at the Vegan House munchin' on that protein salad you told us about, extra dressing and all. Look for two tacky blondes with neon*

*jackets and matching bullhorn tattoos. Take us out, our dance moves are sikk.*

*Lili and Grace, via the web*

### Berkeley in Da House!

I met Honey Owens of Valet years ago when I was a freshman at Cal and she continues to inspire me. Thank you for writing about her new project [issue #115, March].

More people need to understand the enigmatic beauty of her music and her message. Her vibe continues to develop into wonderful projects. I, for one, can't wait to see what she'll do next. *Summer, via the web*

### Goal Keeper

Just wanted to say that Skream is a true musician who deserves props for his rise to the top [issue #115, March; "Whisper to a Skream"]. As a DJ myself, I always get psyched on stories about kids working day and night to develop their sound. It takes a lot of balls to drop everything and focus on the goal. Skream, you the man, keep doing whatcha doing. *Buster, via the web*

### Skreamin' Mad

It's journalists like you who overanalyse the scene on pretentious blogs and "tastemaker" sites like Pitchfork who are very slowly killing dubstep. If you really do care so much for the friends and family upholding the genre, then for fuck's sake leave them be. If you want to show off your vocabulary, fine art or the opera might be a good place to start. *Irrelevant, via XLR8R.com*

### Might As Well Jump!

Sweet Jesus, no. When the hell did happy hardcore rave come back with a dance style and 14 million [YouTube] views [issue #114, January/February; "What Is It: Jumpstyle"]. Damn you, XLR8R in my bathroom. I'm pretty sure my life was better not knowing about this. *Jeff Wayne, Ninja Tune*

### Mixtape Mix Up

What was up with the Glass Candy mixtapes [issue #115, March; "Heart of Glass"]? Bill Conti's "Theme from Rocky"? The *I Dream of Jeannie* theme song? Come on! This has to be some kind of joke. My 10-year-old niece has a more eclectic music taste than this. *Darla, via the web*

### CORRECTIONS

In issue #116's review of Nicolay and Kay's *Time:Line*, we incorreced identified producer Nicolay as being born in Denmark. He was actually born in Holland. In issue #115's "Marked Man" fashion shoot, hair was done by Amy Holdsworth (using Redken products) and make-up was by William Murphy at Luxe Management (using Kieh'l's).

## BJ "Bitter" Bastard's Book of XLR8R Firsts

BJ "Bitter" Bastard's not one for navel-gazing. And he certainly didn't care to trawl through the annals of this rag's history to find for you our finest moments of the past 15 years. But we made him do it anyway. One might think that he'd come away with a veritable history of electronic music culture from '93 'til the present. He did, but he also surfaced with tired drug references, sore eyes (from staring at the worst fractal graphics ever), and God knows how many disses on Moby and prog house. Here he lays bare 10 monumental firsts in XLR8R's early years.

From left to right: XLR8R's first 10 issues.



### First interview: Issue 1

"Bloody Heck! It's 808 State," by publisher Andrew Smith.

**XLR8R:** "What do you think about rave in America?"

**Andrew Barker:** "I like it, it's quite good. But it's quite commercialized. With like the illuminous bangles what you wear around your neck and stuff like that, it's a bit hippified." Yep, that's a pretty fair assessment.

### First diss on trance or progressive house: Issue 2

**Goldie:** "Progressive house, in relation to the name, isn't that at all!" Too bad we covered it for the next six years anyway.

### First interview with RuPaul: Issue 3

We actually interviewed RuPaul? Just so you don't think I'm lying, here's a choice quote:

**Ru Paul:** "You can call me 'he,' you can call me 'she,' you can call me 'Regis and Kathy Lee.'"

### First live show review: Issue 4

From the "Oppressor of the Month" page: "The Pigs!!! Your friends and mine, the boys and girls in blue, showed up earlier this month at Seattle's first successful full moon rave. Despite attempts to scare away the throngs with searchlights, the event went

off well with good vibes all around." Thank God, lest this spark a thousand more police vs. rave stories. Oh, wait, it did.

### First "city" feature: Issue 4

Certainly this page prefigured our now-annual city issue, with exacting reportage like the following: "Portland's scene, while smaller and less sophisticated than Seattle's or Vancouver's, has the look and feel of any decent scene anywhere."

### First "clever" cover line: Issue 5

"Inside: James Brown, Psychic Warriors ov Gaia, Spelling Mistakes." Hey, we warned you!

### First "herb" ad: Issue 7

On the back cover, an ad for Cloud 9: "The next level of consciousness. Not a new drug, a new reality... Beware: Not an illegal drug or a smart drug, this is a new scientific breakthrough in herbs." Uh, sure.

### First coloring contest: Issue 8

Keoki's Kreativitiy Kontest, in which contestants had to write a haiku about bass and color in a Keoki sketch. Third-place prize was a pack of Rave cigarettes. Funny, right?

### First "internet" story: Issue 8

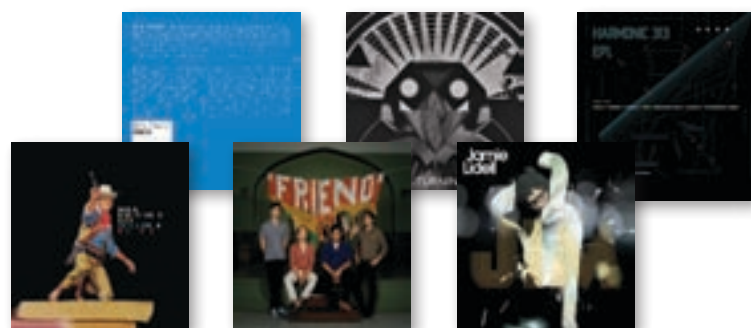
We covered the internet as a phenomenon, in a story entitled "Internet: What It Is and What It Will Mean." "On a computer network, your posting can instantly be read by millions of people—and any one of those people can instantly respond." Dear Mr. XLR8R. My name the honorable bitter bastard. I is live in Djibouti and has many moneys for you. Send me your bank records and you will get many lengths to add to your peepee.

### First goat-themed issue: Issue 9

We asked The Orb's Alex Paterson how he felt "about goats and other animals." "I don't have any problems with them... I think every house should have them. I don't have a goat, but I have some terrapins." In a Richie Hawtin feature, our designer manages to morph the Plastikman symbol into Hawtin's face and then into a goat head in just 10 moves. Goats!



That lovable curmudgeon, BJ "Bitter" Bastard, first appeared in the magazine in issue #41, ranting about the omnipresence of The Headhunters' "God Made Me Funky" break, cargo skirts, and, uh, top 10 lists.



## XLR8R's "Spirit of '93" Contest

We celebrate 15 years of giveaways with 15 pairs of adidas and a Warp Records gift pack.

Back in the spring of 1993, XLR8R marked its first contest giveaway with a pair of tickets to see 808 State and Meat Beat Manifesto in Seattle. Fifteen years later, we're still serving up the beats and the goods on our contest page. To help us celebrate, our longtime friends at adidas have offered up 15 pairs of their amazing Polson ST sneakers for 15 lucky winners. To top it off, our bros at the legendary Warp label are kicking down a gift pack for one grand-prize winner, which includes copies of their last 15 releases such as Jamie Lidell's *Jim*, Born Ruffians' *Red, Yellow and Blue*, Autechre's *Quaristice*, Gravenhurst's *The Western Lands*, Prefuse 73's *Preparations*, Battles' *Mirrored*, !!!'s *Myth Takes*, London Sinfonietta's *Warp Works and 20th Century*

*Masters*, Clark's *Body Riddle* and *Turning Dragon*, and Grizzly Bear's *Yellow House* and the *Friend* EP.

All you've got to do is answer the following question correctly and you could win big.

**What was publisher Andrew Smith's inspiration for the name XLR8R?**

- He saw it on a car's license plate.
- He was a fan of the bands 808 State and Altern 8.
- He named it after his Abici XLR8R Dura-Ace road bike.
- Someone sent him a cryptic text message involving the letters XLR8R.

**One grand-prize winner will receive:** One pair of adidas Polson ST sneakers, and a copy of each of the CDs and vinyl listed.

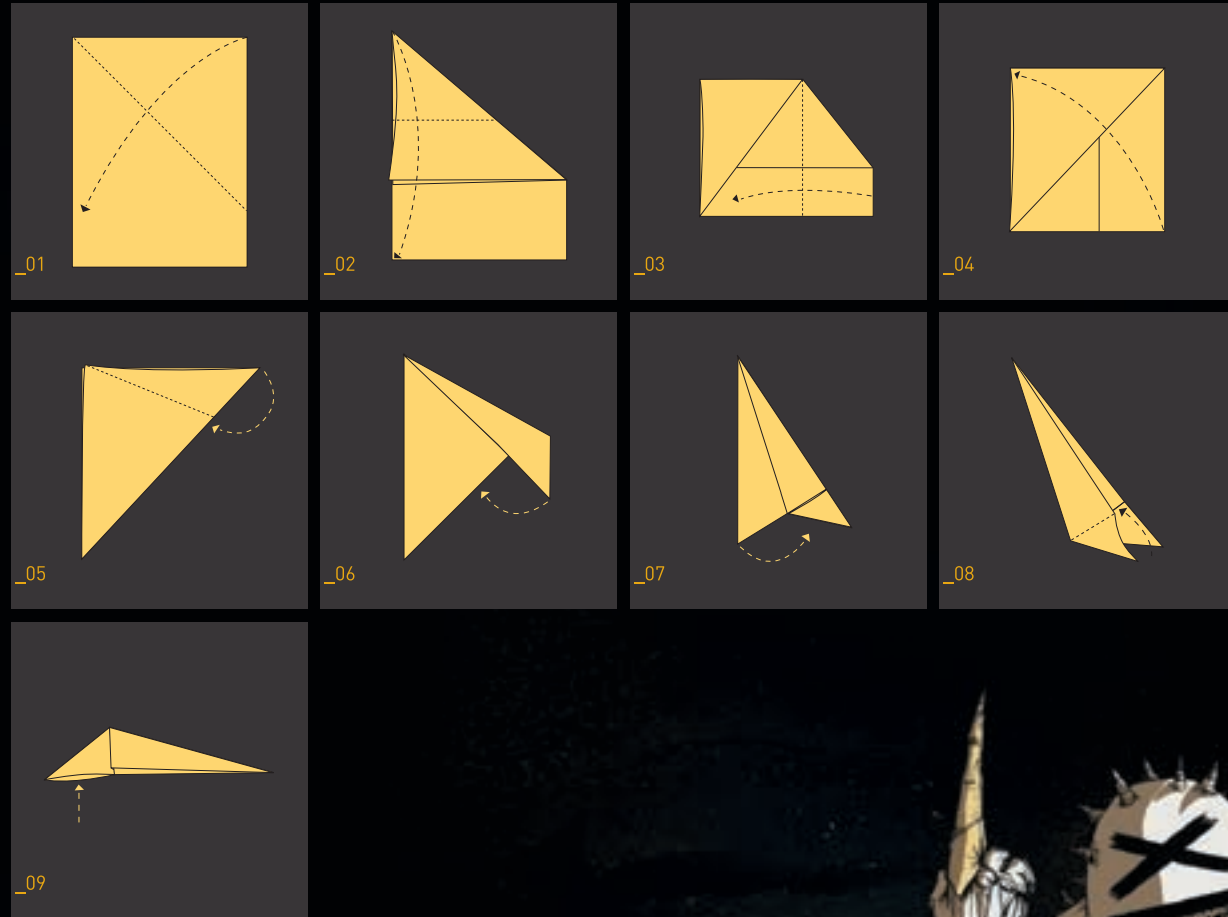
**Fourteen runners up will each receive:** A pair of adidas Polson ST sneakers.

Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email. The first correct answer we receive will be considered the grand-prize winner. Entries must be received by June 10, 2008. Send your entry, with male or female shoe size, to XLR8R's "Spirit of '93 Contest," 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com) with "XLR8R's Spirit of '93 Contest" in the subject line.





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what moves you



# Muhsinah

A DC recording engineer gives R&B a deep, beautiful, defiant smack in the face.

**If there's one thing that Muhsinah Abdul-Karim knows well,** it's the death-defying balancing act of the aspiring musician. "Last year, I was working 12-hour days as an audio engineer at this audio-books studio," she recalls. "While they're reading, I'm supposed to be reading along. But I would just press record and doze off! I was the worst employee!" She can afford to laugh about it now, but the 24-year-old singer-songwriter/producer/engineer is no stranger to the task of forcing square pegs into round holes.

After attending high school at Washington, DC's Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Muhsinah entered the prestigious halls of Howard University. Musical alumni such as Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway acted as default inspirations as Muhsinah struggled to find her own voice. Literally. "I didn't really get good until I got to Howard," she recalls. "But I was only playing piano; I wasn't singing at all. No one had ever heard me sing." With the FM dial brimming with the high-octave ranges of Mary J. Blige and Beyoncé, Muhsinah's own deep register struck a dissonant chord with her self-confidence. "I would think to myself, 'I'm not good at this. My voice is too low, so I'm not gonna sing in front of anybody.'"

The insecurities eventually fell away as she worked as a backup singer for R&B artist Raheem DeVaughn, and word of her angular creations spread throughout DC's bohemian contingent. In 2005, she released the self-produced *Oscillations* EP, followed up this February by a self-produced full-length, *Day.Break 2.0*, that's a beautiful smack in the face of mainstream hip-hop and R&B convention. Tracks like "Discovery," with its reverse waveforms and hefty boom bap, and the bossa nova-infused "Only and Always" testify to an effervescent musical frontier being explored by Muhsinah and a growing cadre of progressive African-American artists.

Unique as her style may be, comparisons to fellow avant-soul artist Georgia Anne Muldrow are inevitable. "The first time I heard her, it was like a soul-shattering experience," she concedes. "You know when someone comes up with an invention and you're like, 'I thought of that!?' I love Georgia so much as a person—meeting her was like meeting a long-lost relative—but we're two totally different artists."

And it shows, as Muhsinah is no longer afraid to embrace her individuality. "There are a lot of people who don't know about me, and a lot of people who won't know about me," she says. "But my intention was never to seek approval. It was just to learn and try something new."

Muhsinah's *Day.Break 2.0* is out now on Rock Slinger Inc.

[muhsinah.com](http://muhsinah.com)



Muhsinah's style is sometimes compared to that of Georgia Anne Muldrow, who we profiled in #110. Writer Mosi Reeves found that she and partner Dudley Perkins are fueled by universal good vibes... and lots and lots of weed. To read the complete article, go to [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).





# Dread Diaspora

Two films take a look at the echoes of Jamaican music worldwide.



### Dub Echoes

Director (and *XLR8R* scribe) Bruno Natal's sweeping documentary on the history of dub and its effect on the world of dance music is nothing short of breathtaking. Natal, a native of Brazil, worked for four-and-a-half years traveling the world and collecting footage of the still-living original vanguard of dub, capturing interviews with legends like King Jammy, Bunny Lee, Mad Professor, and Scientist. Currently making the festival rounds in search of proper theatrical distribution, *Dub Echoes* (to be released on DVD by Soul Jazz) lays out the history and origins of dub in studios like Black Ark, and does a wonderful job revealing the quixotic nature of the Jamaican music industry of the '70s and '80s. (The number of unheard dubplates crumbling in Bunny Lee's warehouse is mind-numbing.) The film then moves on to cover the legions of musicians influenced by dub music, and everyone from Don Letts (London's original punk/reggae DJ) to DJ Rhetmatic to Adam Freeland to Congo Natty to DJ Spooky and Kode 9 weighs in on how dub's sound and culture influenced their own music. Historian David Katz (also an *XLR8R* staff writer) offers commentary along the way, and the whole thing is woven together with beautiful animations that help tell the story. The second half is a little self-indulgent in its leaps to connect every conceivable element of modern production back to dub (and Howie B comes off sounding like a complete wit), but overall the film gives vital insight into just how influential dub music has been on production since the '70s. *Matt Earp*

dubechoes.com

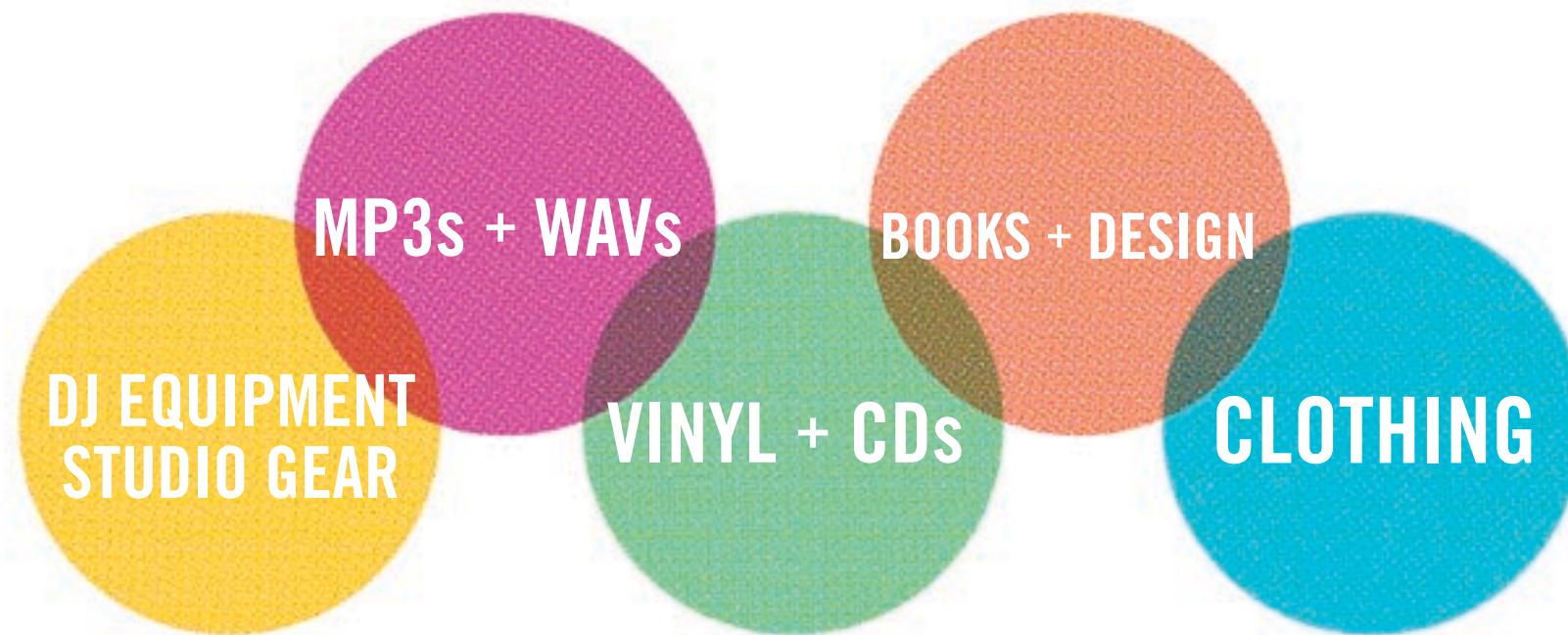


Rio de Janeiro native Bruno Natal, who directed *Dub Echoes*, visited numerous favelas and even a warehouse to bring us the scoop on Brazilian baile funk in May 2005 (#87). To read the complete article, go to [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).

### Reggae Uncensored

With a title like *Reggae Uncensored* (Caroline/Golddust Media; \$12.99), one can only dream about the deluge of Passa Passa T&A footage that viewers might be in for. But *Girls Gone Wild: The Reggae Edition* this is not. Instead, director Ray Stewart takes us on a tour of Jamaica's dancehall and roots scenes as seen through American viewers' eyes. Shot in a faux TV-news style, and appearing to have been filmed entirely on the U.S.'s East Coast, *Reggae Uncensored* packs a stack of performances and interviews with some of reggae's biggest stars into a little over an hour. Where it suffers is in its structure: There's no real theme or narrative threading together each interview or show (from the likes of Damian Marley, Mavado, Collie Buddz, and Beenie Man); the clips live independently of one another, as if placed randomly into a non-existent timeline. (Oh, and that "uncensored" tag is a bit of a misnomer, as there's nothing gratuitous or controversial—save for a choice freestyle from Aidonia—to speak of here.) Where the doc hits really hard is in its footage of on-stage performances. From a rare Ninja Man show, to the Labor Day Parade at Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway with Beenie Man, Sean Paul, and Macka Diamond, to an absolutely fiery performance from Sizzla in Hartford, Connecticut, *Reggae Uncensored's* concert clips make up for what it lacks in the not-for-kids department. *Ken Taylor*

golddust-media.com



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*ttlms*



## Clothes Captioned: In4mation

Throwing shakas and shocking out with Hawaii's street informants.

**In4mation** creative director **Rhandy Tambio** counts **Johnny Cash**, skater Eric Koston, surfer Tom Curren, and Bob Marley among his style icons, an ethos reflected in the Hawaiian brand's mix of street, surf, and skate with a laidback island flair. **In4mation** began throwing shakas in 2002, when partners Tambio, Ryan Arakaki, Todd Shimabuku, and Jun Jo started screenprinting tees out of their two Oahu skate shops—one in suburban Miliani, the other in tourist-laden Waikiki Beach. Last May, Tambio and women's designer Elsa Sandor (of Rookie Skateboards fame) opened a New York office, where they created the most recent collection of easygoing men's and women's streetwear to a soundtrack of Angry Samoans, Desmond Dekker, and Shai Hulud. We caught up Tambio liberally dosing his lunch with Tony's Creole Seasoning, and asked him what to wear for the next endless summer. *Tyra Bangs*  
in4mants.com



**Navy plaid button-down short sleeve**  
*We just love this kind of shirt, so we did our own version with pops of Hawaiian prints hidden under the pocket flaps and center placket.*



**Etnies/In4m Sal Barbier shoe**  
*We've been blessed to do this collaboration with Sal's shop, SLB, and Etnies. We cut down the puffy tongue and colored it up in black and all red to pay tribute to Sal's classic style.*



**Grey shorts with waterproof pocket**  
*We wanted to make waterproof pockets in case you suddenly fall in the water or someone dumps a drink on your crotch.*



**Kate Moss tee**  
*It's our social commentary on brands that always use Kate's likeness in a religious manner. Sorry Kate, you still rule!*



**Respect Locals hoodie**  
*Being born and raised on an island makes you appreciate and take pride in being from somewhere.*



**Fish Hook bag and hat**  
*This pattern is an inside joke, since we've been talking about opening an In4mation tackle shop. You'll definitely "hook up" with the ladies, or be the catch of the day!*



## Book of Genesis

Matmos' Drew Daniel unravels the mysteries behind **Throbbing Gristle's 20 Jazz Funk Greats**.



Last year, in between moving across the country, touring, finishing graduate school, and co-creating this month's new Matmos album, Drew Daniel also managed to pen a book. His contribution to Continuum's 33 1/3 series of long-form essays (each based on a classic album) is a brisk burrow through the substrata of meaning encoded in Throbbing Gristle's oft-derided genre stew *20 Jazz Funk Greats*; the volume is book-ended by glimpses of Daniel responding to the album as a high-school goth "jerk" and 20 years later as a conceptual electronic musician. We sat down with Daniel to find out more about Throbbing Gristle's bastard album. *Michael Byrne*

**XL8R:** Most of the 33 1/3 books are about a band's quintessential album, but this isn't at all the definitive Throbbing Gristle album.

Drew Daniel: I wanted to produce a book that was strong, not just [write] about an album that was strong. In a way, it's a frustrating album because of its diversity. [By the time *20 Jazz Funk Greats* was released], psychedelia had already allowed albums to be sort of internally fluid with different genres. Throbbing Gristle exacerbated that to the point of irritation and fucking with the fanbase in a more... aggressively wimpy way. That's what's cool about this album: [TG is] failing to live up to their own fans' bloodlust.

**You disappear from the book right when you first listen to the album and hate it. When did you start to appreciate it?** It kept cropping up as the kind of thing one could plausibly mix with newer music. I got a radio show in college, right when techno was kind of growing and the industrial scene

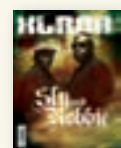
was turning into a bad cliché. And yet I kept being able to mix TG's work with even the weirdest records that were coming out. I guess it was a gateway drug. I don't think I would have had a tolerance for those early techno records if I hadn't listened to TG.

**Was it tough to not relate to TG as a musician in the book?** I feel like if someone knows [Matmos'] work then they'll sort of know what it is that I'm describing about TG that had a big influence on us. I remember reading about a TG concert where there was a Turkish circumcision on-stage. That totally amazed me. It just laid out there this whole idea of noise-music shows as a puberty rite. I loved how literal they could be.

**I was surprised that you take it at face value when [TG frontman] Genesis P-Orridge tells you that the lyrics to "Six Six Sixties" came from a god called Mebar.** My job is to describe those meanings. If [they] are part

of [TG's] world, then that's part of the art. I don't know if Mebar exists or not... The projection of the idea that there's a network of meaning that radiates out from the artwork—that's part of the TG approach. That's part of what I aspire to with Matmos.

Drew Daniel's *20 Jazz Funk Greats* (Continuum Books; paperback, \$10.95) and Matmos' *Supreme Balloon* (Matador) are out now.  
[myspace.com/matmos1](http://myspace.com/matmos1), [continuum-books.com](http://continuum-books.com), [33third.blogspot.com](http://33third.blogspot.com)



Matmos was featured in issue #73, on the occasion of their *The Civil War* release. Drew Daniel appeared again in #85, when we profiled his side-project, Soft Pink Truth. In the photos (taken by Chris Woodcock), Daniel posed in a leather suit with a skeleton. To read the complete article, go to [XL8R.com/117extras](http://XL8R.com/117extras).



# Teyana Taylor

A Harlem dance queen and Pharrell protégé takes style and substance to *TRL*.

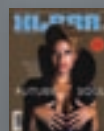
It's not unusual to hear grandiose claims echoing down the halls of any high school. But no other high-school student has the bragging rights to cultivating two dance crazes (the "Chicken Noodle Soup" and the "Tone Wop"), choreographing Beyoncé's dance moves for both the music video and 2006 *VMA* performance of "Ring the Alarm," having her own episode of MTV's *My Super Sweet 16*, and being signed to Pharrell Williams' label.

Teyana Taylor is the latest lifeform beamed up to Pharrell's StarTrak spaceship, and she seems to have stepped straight into a Harlem-meets-Hollywood fairytale. You'd think she'd be soaring on cloud nine, yet on the eve of her debut release, *From a Planet Called Harlem* (StarTrak/Interscope), Taylor is as down-to-earth as they come. "I'm pretty honored," she says with a signature rasp that belies her 17 years. "I'm just a regular kid from Harlem that's doing me."

Taylor's name began buzzing on industry tongues after the pandemonium surrounding 2006's surprise smash "Chicken Noodle Soup" by Webstar (featuring Young B). "I was really grinding, skateboarding, doing my thing," Taylor reflects. "But I wasn't looking for a [record] deal." Yet when her dance prowess unexpectedly landed her a meeting with Pharrell himself, it was as if Cinderella finally met her hipster godfather. "I'm thinking, 'This is my idol I'm standing in front of,'" she recalls. "It was crazy because we both had on the same shoes!" The singer soon found herself in Atlanta recording tracks with producers like newcomer Hit Boy, Bangladesh, and Jazze Pha, who helmed the lead single "Google Me." The result is an impressive collage of futuristic R&B embellished with hip-hop hyperbole, tales of teenage love, and name-drops of Pharrell's two fashion enterprises, Billionaire Boys Club and Ice Cream.

With a billowy mane of curls and sporting the latest limited Nike SB Dunks, Taylor represents a burgeoning subculture within the Generation Y demographic: she's an unpredictable female streetwear style maven in the vein of Kelis, J\*Davey, or Tiombe Lockhart. And with *TRL* and *106 & Park* within her grasp, she has outlets to connect with her tech-savvy, retro-style-conscious audience and officially initiate the rebirth of cool. But in the meantime, she doesn't mind sticking to what she loves best: XBOX 360, PS3, watching *Jimmy Neutron*. "I do the same things that a typical kid my age does," she concedes, "but I'm a little more weird."

Teyana Taylor's *From a Planet Called Harlem* is out now on StarTrak/Interscope. [rockstarteyana.com](http://rockstarteyana.com)



Teyana Taylor isn't the only avant-R&B style maven to have graced our pages. Rico "Superbizzee" Washington also profiled J\*Davey in #96 and Tiombe Lockhart for the cover of our annual style issue in September 2007 (#110). To read the complete article, go to [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).

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# The Space Between

Underground culture's brightest documentarians visualize sound for Jet Black Crayon's *In the Interim*.



Jet Black Crayon's music is a metaphor for watching the veteran skater glide down Valencia Street on a Sunday at sunset. It's not about the craziest tricks, the most extreme endurance, or partying 'til you puke; just the smooth ebb and flow of wheels on concrete, punctuated by the intensity of traffic or slight hills. The San Francisco-based trio—consisting of skater/musician Tommy Guerrero, DJ Gadget, and recording engineer Monte Vallier, plus attendant collaborators—has continuously served up jam sessions that meander through post-rock, funk, and downtempo. Their new album, *In the Interim*, is more of the same hazy groove, and comes with a DVD, wherein JBC's talented filmmaker friends offer visual accompaniment to various songs. We caught up with six of them, and asked them where inspiration's been hiding. *Vivian Host*

Jet Black Crayon's *In the Interim* is out now on Function 8. [function8.com](http://function8.com)

**“MONDAY”**

“I’m obsessed with lines and the song sounds, to me, like someone drawing lines,” says SF-based Andrew Paynter, 34, of his meditative black-and-white video of flashing pavement and L.A. street scenes (shot from a skater’s perspective while in motion).

**What’s your advice for aspiring filmmakers?**

Follow through with your ideas and don’t let exterior things influence you too much.

**What’s the toughest lesson you’ve ever had to learn?**

Nothing in life is permanent. Enjoy things while you have them, as at some point they’ll all dissolve away.

**What are you working on?**

A mural in San Francisco in conjunction with Juice Design, an ongoing book project with Geoff McFetridge, and a colab with Dr. Romanelli and Lupe Fiasco.

**“8 BAD YEARS”**

Skate videographer Greg Hunt’s clip pays homage to skate films of the mid-’80s. “I shot the whole video on an old Quasar VHS camera and tried to keep everything historically accurate: board, clothes, tricks, filming, and editing,” says L.A.-based Hunt. “It was a lot of fun for me and a lot of work for Kevin, who was the skater. He had to learn all those old school tricks and then do all kinds of modern tricks on a 1985 setup!”

**What’s the toughest lesson you’ve ever had to learn?**

When returning from a month-long trip *never* take your eyes off the shoebox full of shot footage. That is, unless you feel like laying in bed for a week staring at the ceiling.

**What are you working on?**

Alien Workshop’s *Mind Field* video.

**“LOST IN THE FOG”**

The murals of San Francisco’s Mission

District make up most of the backdrop to this flick starring the JBC members drinking Tecate, buying diapers, and stealing each other’s bikes. It’s shot by 33-year-old SF local Dan Wolfe, who’s best known for his work on the *Eastern Exposure* skate videos and his recent clip (with artist Jeremy Fish) for Aesop Rock’s “Pigs.”

**What’s the toughest lesson you’ve ever had to learn?**

Don’t rack up credit-card debt buying cameras and computers.

**What are you working on?**

Various short projects with Juice Design/ Adidas Skateboarding, internet video stuff, and an HD skate movie.

**“POST MERIDIAN”**

Parisian Christophe Beaucourt’s piece is a commentary on man versus nature—“an industrial poem,” he calls it. Via grainy ski resort footage, this lover of backcountry





Artist on...  
**King James' Bible**



Tech-house producer/DJ **Paul Woolford** examines the epoch that yielded **Aphex Twin's *Selected Ambient Works 85-92***.

Words and photos **Paul Woolford**



**Aphex Twin's *Selected Ambient Works 85-92*** is simply one of my favorite albums of all time. Released in 1993, *Selected Ambient Works* emerged from a period of hybrids and rampant experimentalism, as techno had split off into hardcore and the advent of drum & bass was just around the corner. A master of hybrids himself, Aphex Twin (a.k.a. Richard D. James) used breakbeats in new and innovative ways, a quality *Selected Ambient Part 1* shares with Innerzone Orchestra's "Bug in the Bassbin" and Doc Scott's *N.H.S.* EP—all key records that vastly shaped the landscape and marked this epoch of dance music as being one of frenzied research and development.

When Aphex Twin first came on the scene, a flurry of press activity followed.

Many attempts were made to find out more about the completely fresh sounds coming from his equipment. He had pricked-up various scenesters' ears with the *Analogue Bubblebath* EP, which eventually found its way to the A&R side of trail-blazing Belgian techno label R&S.

When James sent them more material their jaws must've dropped. Not only did he produce absolutely insane, killer, frantic breakbeat- and acid-driven techno of various hues, but he also made the most beautiful, fragile, lush, naive, and truly visionary ambient-inspired pieces. The latter, which make up *Selected Ambient Works 85-92*, are a snapshot of an artist creating for the purest of reasons; James had not been signed to any label when that material

was recorded, so his techniques were untainted by commerce, DJ-friendliness, or indeed any other concession. Just raw creativity. His methods of programming, particularly with regard to percussion, were so innovative, and his sounds were awe-inspiring.

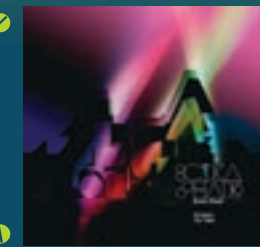
It's difficult to explain what the opening track "Xtal" does to me. As with most of the tracks on the album, it is drenched in a waterfall of reverb, and the multitude of emotions it stirs makes me think of being in the womb, cushioned from harm, coupled with a naive child-like innocence. Yet it has this narcotic, strung-out undercurrent that gives it such an edge. And remember that some of these tracks were mastered from cassette. Yes, cassette tapes. In our age of obsession with loudness and audio

clarity, it's important to keep in mind that without amazing ideas, any art form is utterly vacant. In the coming weeks, the new incarnation of R&S will be reissuing *Selected Ambient Works 85-92*, so there's no good reason that anyone with ears shouldn't own a copy—or two.

*Paul Woolford Presents Bobby Peru: The Truth* is out now on 20:20 Vision.  
[myspace.com/paulwoolford](http://myspace.com/paulwoolford)

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**ARTIST** Booka Shade  
**RELEASE** 'Planetary / City Tales'  
**LABEL** Get Physical Music

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**ARTIST** Jerome Sydenham, Texu, Romantic Couch  
**RELEASE** 'Ebian'  
**LABEL** Idaban Records

"Ibadian Records presents 'Ebian' another hot slice of Tech House finesse featuring Jerome Sydehnham, Samuel L Session, Argy, Texu and Romantic Couch."



**ARTIST** Danny Tenaglia  
**RELEASE** 'Bottom Heavy 2008'  
**LABEL** Tribal

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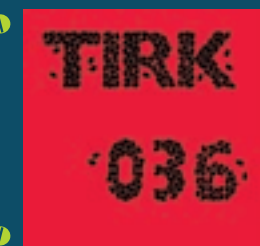
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**RELEASE** 'Bodycrash'  
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**LABEL** Azuli Records

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**ARTIST** Chaz Jankel  
**RELEASE** 'Get Myself Together'  
**LABEL** Tirk Recordings

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# I Wanna Be Adored

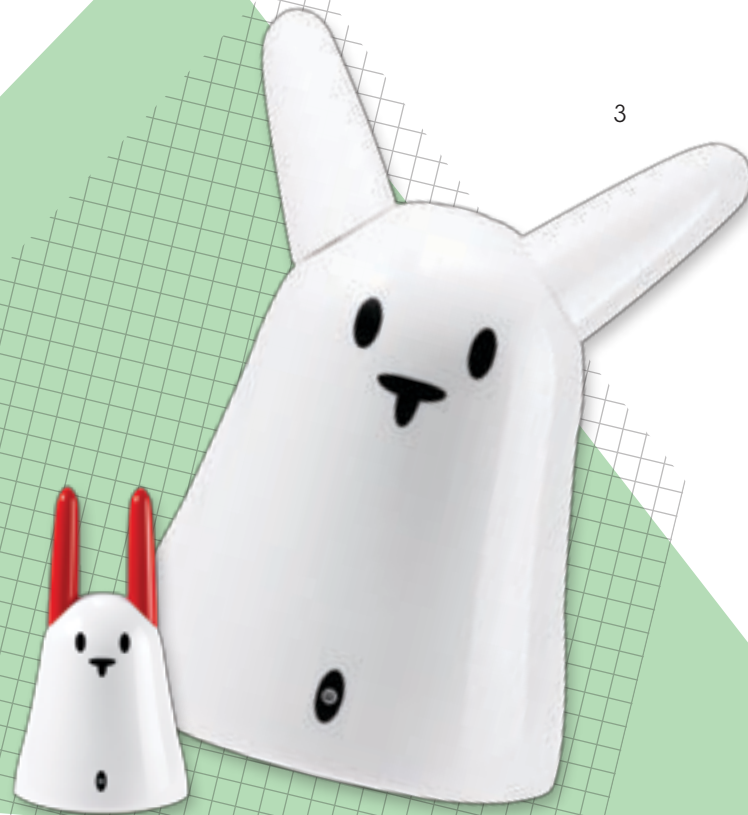
Cute items that want to be taken home and gently used.

Compiled by Ali Gitlow



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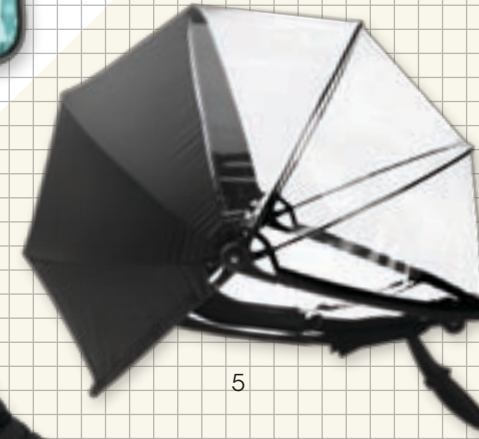


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6



9

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charlesoflondon.com

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nubrella.com

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blairwear.com

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9. Itokin Park Mikazukin (\$67.99) and Nano (\$74.99)  
myplasticheart.com

10. Verte x Etnies Ollie King high-top (\$79)  
etnies.com, vertelife.com



Words Tomas Palermo  
Photo Greg Grindley



**ESCO**

A rockative Jamaican producer-singer balances multiple missions.

**Welcome to a new dancehall generation.** A tidal wave of young Jamaican talent has risen up in the past three years, including vocalists Mavado, Demarco, and Munga Honourable, and producers Stephen McGregor, Daseca, and King Jammy's sons Jam2 and Baby G. They're charting dancehall music's next phase but not limiting their sound, according to fellow new-gen artist, 27-year-old Matthew J.S. Thompson, better known as Esco.

"The generation now is looking more to the world," says Thompson via cell phone from outside his Kingston studio. "Jamaica is filled with so much talent and it's firing in all different directions; not dancehall alone, but R&B, alternative, even some house music. I'm telling you, man, we're attacking music from all angles now!"

Thompson knows about versatility: "I'm a *rockative* kind of guy. I listen to some alternative rock. I'm big on hip-hop too," he informs. Plus, he's been involved in dancehall culture as a disc jockey since age 13, following in the footsteps of his famous dad, Errol "ET" Thompson, who was one of the first DJs to play banned Bob Marley tunes on Jamaican radio. He's also a

producer, label owner (of the 1-1-1 imprint), and artist.

Up until recently, Thompson was half of the duo Leftside and Esco with his friend Craig Parks. The two formed the Young Legends label and churned out popular riddims like Galore, Drop Drawers, Dem Time Deh, Martial Arts, and Bullet, reaching a pinnacle with the 2004 hit single "Tuck In Yu Belly" on their self-produced Giggy riddim. Then, like an exhalation of spliff smoke, the duo amicably split.

Thompson stayed on his grind, quickly establishing a solo career with synth-heavy electro jump-up tracks like "She Want Me," "Dun Dem Credit," and the sweet skanking one-drop tune "God Is Love." He cut driving, triplet-snare-speckled singles with Birchill Records' Chris Birch and McGregor while producing his own The Show Goes On riddim. "After the group split, I had to prove that I'm capable of managing the whole movement on my own—production, recording, performing, singing," says Thompson, who is clearly comfortable juggling many roles. "I'm a solo artist now, but I still have my productions in the pipeline," he says, referring to his forthcoming 40-4 Play riddim featuring Beenie Man,

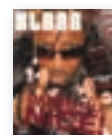
Bounty Killer, Lady Saw, and Wayne Marshall.

Versatile as always, the tall, clean-cut artist—who favors a modern Jamaican look that mixes designer jeans and shades with athletic attire and clean kicks (street but not gully)—also has another mission: "One of my goals is to show the world that there can be a balance between the worldly music and the spiritual music." Thus, you can expect rugged dancehall, romantic tracks, and uplifting one-drop material in the mix on his forthcoming album, *Showstopper*.

"I really don't want to leave out the bangin' club stuff and the tracks for the ladies, 'cause that's where my image works best," he says. "At the same time I still want to teach and uplift people."

Esco's *Showstopper* is out this fall on 1-1-1 Productions.

[myspace.com/itsesco](http://myspace.com/itsesco)

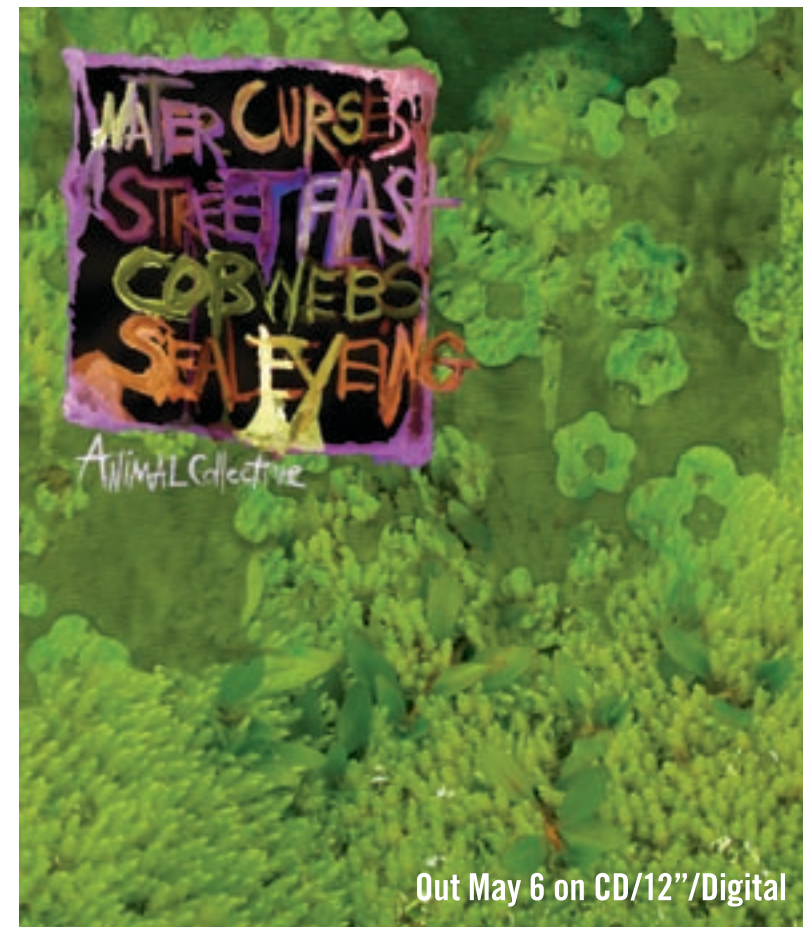


We've been huge fans of all forms of Jamaican music since the beginning. Our January 2004 (#74) issue was a dancehall celebration, with Elephant Man on the cover and features on Vybz Kartel, Tanya Stephens, Assassin, and Cécile. To read the complete article, go to [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).

## FOUR TET

### Ringer

Four Tet returns with four tracks of techno (not techno).  
Mini LP out May 6—CD/2x12"/Digital



Out May 6 on CD/12"/Digital



### The Cinematic Orchestra

Live at the Royal Albert Hall

"Playing London's 4000-seater Royal Albert Hall is hardly like doing a gig at a festival or club. But these days it's one of the few venues that can genuinely do justice to the sheer scale and splendor of what The Cinematic Orchestra have become... joined by the 24-piece Heritage Orchestra onstage, this live album captures them at the height of their powers... these tracks build into a symphony as vast and ornate as the Hall itself, yet still manage to capture the most intimate of emotions within their expansive grace." \*\*\*\*\* *DJ*

Out April 22—CD/2xLP/Digital



## THE KILLS

### Midnight Boom

"Visceral, subversive and immediate... but they also know how to claw at your heart strings." 8/10 *Popmatters*

"The Kills sound and feel like no other band—nocturnal, way-out, untouchable." \*\*\*\*\* *Mojo*

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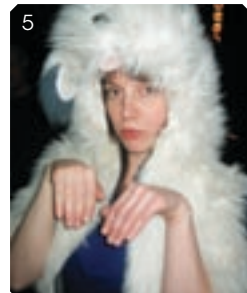


# Nerds Gone Wild

Words **Matt Earp**  
Photos **Matt Earp**

*XLR8R* takes to **SXSW Interactive** in search of the latest in music technology

Every March, the week before the massive South By Southwest Music Festival takes over Austin, Texas, **SXSW Interactive** brings in thousands of people from the web and new-media worlds to unveil their new products, talk shop, and party 'til the wee hours. It's grown to become one of the world's biggest tech events. *XLR8R* went to Nerd Spring Break to get the inside scoop on some of the best events and upcoming releases. Here are five of our favorites. [Matt Earp sxsw.com/interactive](http://Matt Earp sxsw.com/interactive)



**1. Twitter**

Twitter is a micro-blogging site and service based around 140-character texts (called "tweets") that can be received by anyone who checks your user profile or subscribes to your "feed." Twitter has been the talk of two SXSWi conferences now, and while the concept of text messaging the world ("lifestreaming") gives some the creeps, the tech community has embraced it. Music lovers have too, and web-radio stations are also starting to use it (SomaFM Twitters all its shows). Now anyone can tell the world in real time what track DJ Assault just dropped and who is juking to it on the dancefloor.  
[twitter.com](http://twitter.com)

**2. Threadless Party @ Tap Room**

Even though SXSWi had more women in attendance this year than anyone can remember, it didn't prevent the line for the men's bathroom from being three times as long as the Threadless/Etsy/Moo/Timbuk2 People Powered Party. Everyone was covered in stickers from Moo (the card-creation website) and decked out in the latest Threadless t-shirts, wiggling it to Austin's veteran DJ Mel, Chicago's Flosstradamus, and yours truly (as DJ Kid Kameleon). Plus, Curt of Flosstradamus demoed FlossyFX, his Serato sample plug-in program built in Adobe AIR that now even works on an iPhone!  
[threadless.com](http://threadless.com)

**3. Mog**

Online communities based around music are older than the web itself. Now, folks like Mog are correcting some MySpace's deficiencies with a blogging platform that's tailored towards music discovery. Mog lets you upload info about your listening habits and post about them, then cross-references those posts in a search-engine-friendly way so that your thoughts about the new Amplive MP3 show up half a dozen places at once on the site, from your blog to Amplive's page to the hip-hop community tracking his music. They've also partnered with the Rhapsody network for on-demand streaming tracks so that when someone checks out your profile they can listen to the music you think is important.  
[mog.com](http://mog.com)

**4. Songbird**

As the digital music you want to hear gets spread between every imaginable device, network, web-radio station, and website, keeping track of it all can be a headache (think of all the misnamed files!). Although still in development, Songbird is here to help. It's an open-source media player that's partially like iTunes or WinAmp and partially a web-and-media browser like Firefox. It aggregates personal and web-based music collections, as well as podcasts, music videos, and more. Plugins and extensions abound, as, according to founder Rob Lord, the goal is to let you play "music you want from the sites you want on devices you want."  
[songbirdnest.com](http://songbirdnest.com)

**5. RVIP/Rubyred/Get Satisfaction**

Jonathan Grubb and Kestrin Pantera have been involved in a ridiculous number of cool endeavors. Grubb is the CEO of a hot web consultancy called Rubyred Labs and a co-founder of Get Satisfaction, a discussion space aimed at connecting companies and customers around problems users have with products. Pantera, a cellist, has appeared in music videos and films, in addition to working for Rubyred Labs. But at SXSW they run RVIP, an RV equipped with a karaoke machine and decked out with company shwag that rolls from party to party, shepherding tipsy user-experience designers to their next bash, Tom Jones style.  
[rubyredlabs.com](http://rubyredlabs.com),  
[getsatisfaction.com](http://getsatisfaction.com)



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# Spin Cycle



Hot Chip



Reggae singer **Cocoa Tea** has expressed his support for Barack Obama's presidential campaign with a song entitled, simply, "Barack Obama."

Out of nowhere, an amateur video made for **Cansei de Ser Sexy's** "Music Is My Hot Hot Sex" climbed to

YouTube's front page; at press time it had become the site's most watched video ever (period), with nearly 108 million views. Reps from Sub Pop, CSS' label, had no idea how the video became so popular, but admitted that it might have had something to do with the song's pervert-search-friendly title.

On the topic of Brazilian electro-punk-pop, **Bonde Do Role** returns to the U.S. this month with new members that they acquired from an MTV Brazil-sponsored talent contest.

At this year's Plug Awards, **Arcade Fire** took home the prize for best album (*Neon*

*Bible*), **Justice** for best new artist and best electronic album (*f*), **Aesop Rock** for best hip-hop album (*None Shall Pass*), and **Hot Chip** for best DJ album (*DJ-Kicks*). See the rest of the winners at [plugawards.com](http://plugawards.com).

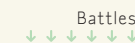
**Grooverider**, the world-renowned drum & bass

DJ known to his mum as Raymond Bingham, was sentenced to four years in a Dubai, United Arab Emirates jail for being in possession of cannabis and hardcore porn at the city's airport late last year. London club Fabric set up an online petition to protest his incarceration at [petitiononline.com/gr00v3](http://petitiononline.com/gr00v3).

## Get Psyched!!!

Expect new records this month from **Islands** (Anti-), **KRS One and Buckshot** (Duck Down), **Matmos** (Matador), **Four Tet** (Domino), and **No Age** (Sub Pop).

## Get Outside



The spring-summer festival season is upon us. Among the highly anticipated fests are Montreal's MUTEK 08 (May 28-June 1; **Kode9 and The Spaceape**, **Modeselektor**, and **Megasoid**), Barcelona's Sónar Festival (June 19-21; **Theo Parrish**, **Yo Majesty**, **Yellow Swans**, **Kid Acne**, and a reunited **Madness**), Hertfordshire, U.K.'s Wild in the Country Festival (July 5; **Björk**, **The Field**, **M.A.N.D.Y.**, **Dixon**, **Battles**, and **Underworld**), and Movement: Detroit's Electronic Music Festival (May 24-26; **Carl Craig**, **Alton Miller**, **Girl Talk**, **Guillaume & The Coutu Dumonts**, and **Zip**). Go to [mutek.org](http://mutek.org), [sonares.wildinthecountry.co.uk](http://sonares.wildinthecountry.co.uk), and [movement.com](http://movement.com) for tickets.

After a nearly 20-year run, legendary London venue **Turnmills** closed its doors in March when its lease expired. The first club of its kind to obtain a 24-hour dance license in the U.K., it helped to kick-start the city's rave scene

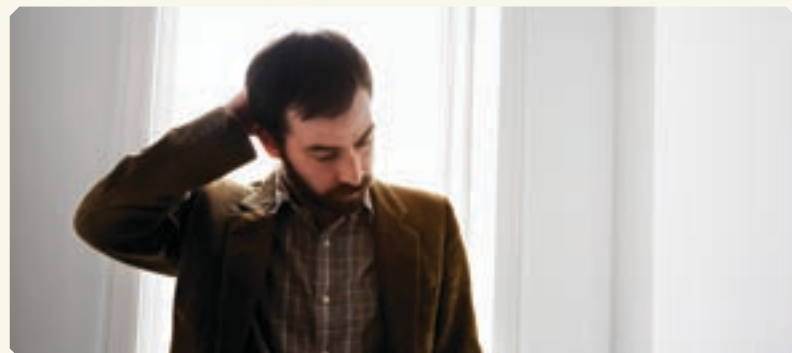
in the early '90s. Tokyo's **Spacelab Yellow**, a venerated techno hotspot for the last 16 years, will also close its doors this summer. For those heads that even Beatport can't please,

there's neutunes.de, the digital portal for German techno and house distributor Neuton. If you happen to miss M.A.N.D.Y. in the U.K., catch the tail end of their tour with **Audiofly** and

**Heidi** this month. For remaining dates, check [physical-music.com](http://physical-music.com). RIP *No Depression* and *Resonance*, producer **Teo Macero** (82), and **Michael "Mikey Dread" Campbell** (54).

## XLR8R Office Airwaves

- James T. Cotton *Like No One* (Spectral Sound)
- VIA *Melatonin* (Room40)
- Quantec *Thousands of Thoughts* (Quietus)
- Soulcenter II (W.v.B. Enterprises/Novamute)
- Giovanni Marks *Lurk Model EP* (RCRDLBL)
- VIA *DINTF EP* (Spectral Sound)
- VIA *Playing Around* (Made to Play)
- The Streets *A Grand Don't Come for Free* (Vice)
- Magnetic Fields *Distortion* (Nonesuch)
- Padded Cell *Night Must Fall* (DC Recordings)



## ;D Phone Pix! From Max Glazer



"An afternoon drive down Troy Avenue in Brooklyn gone awry. I was actually thinking about renting the store until someone parked their car in it. Notice the open doors. In a hurry?"

Max Glazer is a member of Federation Sound. [djmaxglazer.com](http://djmaxglazer.com)



XLR8R  
YEAR  
ZERO!

## Mixtape by XLR8R Publisher Andrew Smith

### 1. Altern 8 "Evapor 8"

The kings of acid house, instrumental in the naming of this magazine. Need I say more?

### 2. Plastikman "Plasticity"

An 11-minute analog odyssey from Richie Hawtin's first Plastikman album, *Sheet One*.

### 3. The Orb "Towers of Dub"

The height of chill-out. The version off the *Live 93* album makes the spine tingle and induces MDMA flashbacks.

### 4. The Martian "Sex in Zero Gravity"

A true Detroit classic on Submerge's Red Planet label. Had to throw in a little work from magazine fave Eddie "Flashin" Fowlkes.

### 5. Cajmere "Percolator"

"Percolator" is a classic, and it still sounds fresh. Cajmere truly pushed the boundaries of house when he brewed up this tune.

### 6. M.C. Solaar "Bouge De La"

For those who remember acid jazz... It was tunes like this, from French rapper M.C. Solaar, that made the genre more than just a pile of Roy Ayers samples.

### 7. Shaggy "Oh Carolina"

Oh yes, *XLR8R* was down with the dancehall way back then—we don't front! Although the same can't be said for Shaggy.

### 8. Polygon Window "Quoth"

Aphex Twin granted us an interview back in the day that involved \$150 in phone bills and bizarre fax transmissions. Totally worth it.

### 9. Original Rockers (Rockers Hi-Fi) "Rockers to Rockers"

Dick and Glynn (now Bigga Bush) put dub-house and the Birmingham reggae scene on the map with their excellent 4/4 bangers.

### 10. Code 071 & M.A.D. "A London Sumtin' (Remix)"

Reinforced Records supplied us with the 'ardcore tunes right from the start, and this remix by Deigo and Goldie is a stunning example of this period in proto-drum & bass.



Hear Andrew Smith's mixtape in the podcast section of [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).





# ENTERTAIN WEEKLY

WORDS ANDREW PARKS

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ELECTRONICA? THE PRODIGY, THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS, AND OTHER PIONEERS OF ARENA-SIZED RAVE JAMS SPEAK OUT ON THE STATE OF THE SCENE





"AT SOME POINT DURING THE *HOTEL OR 18* TOURS, I CAME TO THE REALIZATION THAT I WAS MISERABLE."  
— MOBY

It's 2008, and Moby's made up his mind.

He's done with touring. Not DJing or public appearances in general, but performing the kind of *Sweating to the Anthems* shows he did during his post-*Play* period—the ones that opened with a thrash-techno version of "Machete" and closed with a Christ-like pose and the sputtering bpm stunt of "Thousand," the "world's fastest song."

In other words, Moby's done staging festivals with David Bowie, New Order, and OutKast, done pretending he's a rock star that sprints across amphitheater stages and plays six instruments within one song, and done sticking his iconic dome out into the wild like an egg that must be cracked.

"At some point during the *Hotel or 18* tours, I came to the realization that I was miserable," says Moby. "Which is weird, as it seems like every musician's dream is to do big venues and long tours, but the bigger the venues got, the less I enjoyed touring. Performing itself was fun. I just didn't enjoy waking up in a parking lot on a bus every day and being away from home for six months."

To restore some semblance of order to his life, Moby did the unthinkable. He returned to his late-'80s roots by DJing at small New York City clubs such the postage-stamp-sized Alphabet City haunt known as Nublu.

"I quickly realized that I had more fun DJing records for 75 people at Nublu than going on tour and performing for 10,000 people a night," explains Moby. "I can imagine if I have children at some point, they're gonna say, 'Okay, college is \$200,000 for four years and you need to pay for it.' And I'll say, 'Maybe I could ... if I'd toured more instead of DJing at Nublu.' From a financial perspective, I'm an idiot."

Moby's newfound credo is simple: Spinning records for an intimate crowd is more fulfilling than entertaining a faceless, seething mass of thousands. But let's be honest; it's also troubling/telling in terms of what it says about electronic music's place in American popular culture these days. After all, if Moby, a one-time activist/tea peddler/concert promoter/restaurateur/producer/DJ won't do the music industry's monkey dance anymore, who will?

That's what we set out to examine on the eve of *XLR8R*'s 15th Anniversary: whether the Top 40 takeover that "electronica" promised in the mid-to-late '90s ever amounted to anything. As it turns out, some of dance music's biggest icons are more ambivalent about their fame—and the hype surrounding electronic music—than you might think.



## WINDING UP

More than a decade has passed since July 1, 1997, the day The Prodigy topped *Billboard*'s album chart with *The Fat of the Land*'s unprecedented—in terms of electronic music at least—first-week sales of more than 200,000 copies. The group's third LP would eventually go double-platinum in the U.S., largely thanks to the four-alarm beats of Liam Howlett and the sneering and shouting of a Johnny Rottenized Keith Flint on such crossover singles as "Firestarter" and "Breathe." It would help herald the "New British Invasion" to some, and define the ether-borne "electronica" scene to others.

"Now I understand why [the electronica trend] had to happen, but we were disgusted about it at the time," explains Howlett, speaking from the studio as he finishes up The Prodigy's fifth full-length. "Like, 'What the fuck, man? Let it be! The worst thing you can do right now is pigeonhole us.' None of us cared if electronica broke through or not, we cared about whether *we* broke through or not."

This is understandable. The Prodigy had been trying to invade the States since the early '90s, when they split headlining duties with Moby on a tour that was "terrible" but entertaining for a tour bus full of rowdy 19-year-olds, who were already being called "kiddie rave" leaders in their native England thanks to such seminal hardcore techno singles as "Charly" and "Everybody in the Place."

"Some people totally got it and others were more like, 'What the fuck?'" says Howlett of the group's first U.S. trek. "We kinda liked being misunderstood, though."

## BORN SLIPPING

Underworld had a hard time appealing to American audiences in the late '80s for another reason. "We were crap," says vocalist Karl Hyde matter-of-factly, referring to what fans call "Underworld Mk1," the electro-pop phase that predated the one-two punch of 1993's *Dubnobasswithmyheadman* and 1996's *Second Toughest In the Infants*. Back then, Underworld produced two records they'll never perform again, all in hopes of becoming pop stars, right down to a tour with The Eurythmics. It didn't work at all, so the duo of Hyde and multi-

instrumentalist Rick Smith disbanded briefly before recruiting DJ Darren Emerson and reforming as "Underworld Mk2."

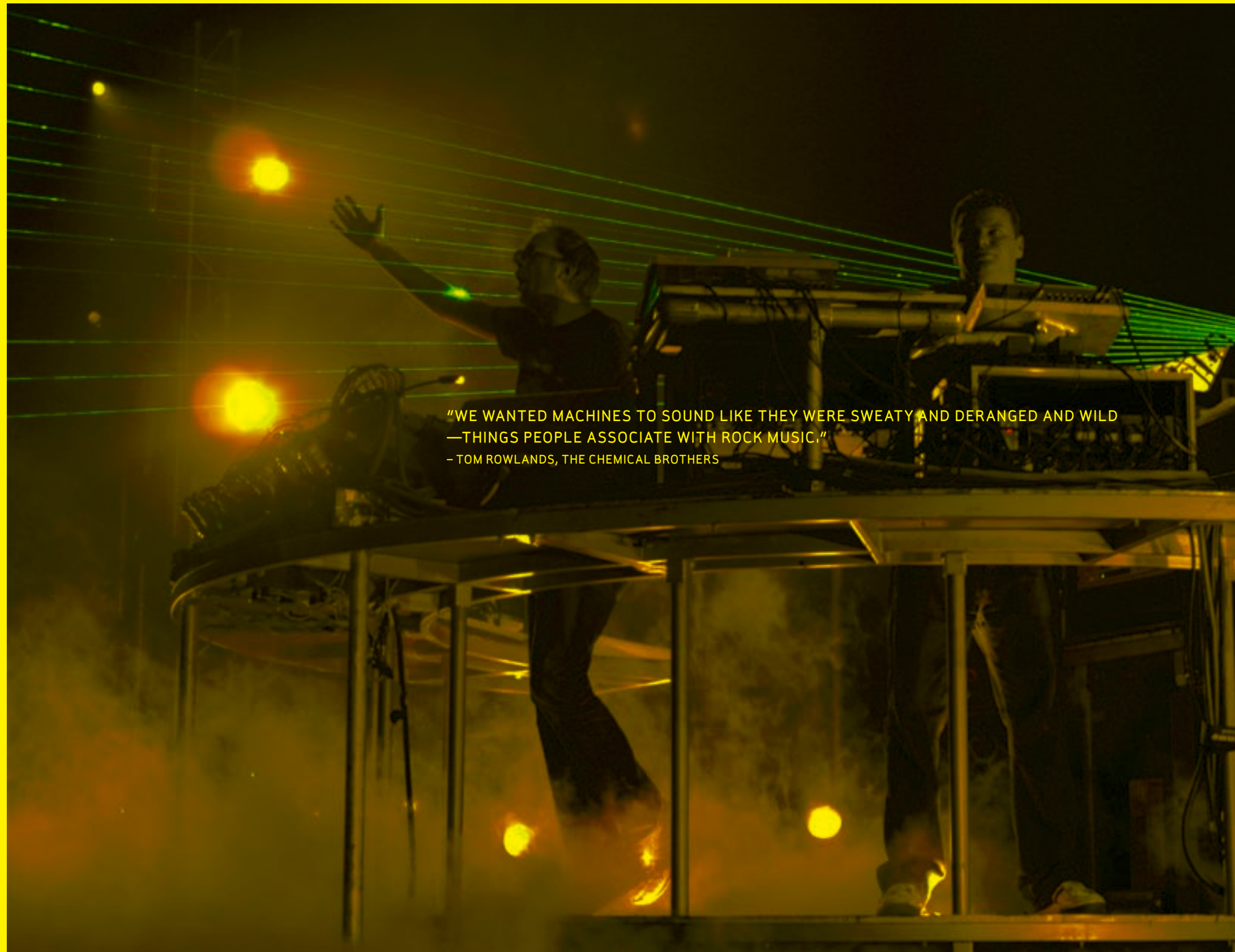
"Our experience in the '80s was of catering to the music industry, and in the '90s we dismissed that [idea]," explains Hyde. "We said, 'You know, that's not for us. We're an independent act on an independent label. We want to make music for ourselves—music we're excited by, not the kind of music we thought might get us on the charts.'"

That relaxed, committed-to-quality attitude earned Underworld one of the U.K.'s first success stories with club kids and indie rockers—an LCD Soundsystem for 1993, if you will. However, they didn't truly break into the U.S. market until the sudden success of "Born Slippy [N.U.X.X.]," a b-side that took on a second life when it was featured in the era-defining heroic drama *Trainspotting*. Arriving in 1996—nearly a year before The Prodigy's breakthrough disc—the film's soundtrack positioned such classic rock 'n' roll icons as Iggy Pop and Lou Reed alongside such important electronic acts as Leftfield, New Order, and Underworld. Oozing hipness, *Trainspotting*—a sort of *Quadrophenia* for the burgeoning Ecstasy generation—made club culture seem like the logical "next big thing" to follow the alt-rock takeover of the early-to-mid-'90s. (Especially since Kurt Cobain had died nearly two years before the film's release, robbing alt-rock of its leader and leaving listeners stunned by a procession of sub-par grunge bands like Sponge and Candlebox.)

## SPACED INVADERS

"The media was suddenly left writing about Jewel," remembers Moby, whose *Everything Is Wrong* LP was named the best album of 1995 by *Spin*, right in front of Tricky's *Maxinquaye*. "They needed something that had a degree of legitimacy to it, so writers suddenly got excited about electronic music—about acts like Underworld and The Chemical Brothers—at least, until Limp Bizkit started making records."

"I remember hearing the term 'the New British Invasion' [in 1997] and thinking, 'We don't want a part in any invasion, let alone this one,'" adds Hyde. "Something about that era in the '90s seemed like the



"WE WANTED MACHINES TO SOUND LIKE THEY WERE SWEATY AND DERANGED AND WILD  
—THINGS PEOPLE ASSOCIATE WITH ROCK MUSIC."  
— TOM ROWLANDS, THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS





"WE DIDN'T DO THIS IN A MISGUIDED HOPE OF ATTRACTING PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T LIKE DANCE MUSIC."  
— TOM ROWLANDS, THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS

"WE DIDN'T DO THIS IN A MISGUIDED HOPE OF ATTRACTING PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T LIKE DANCE MUSIC."

kiss of death in a way because British electronica was held up to be the next big thing to replace grunge. It was really, really odd that people chose something that was so *not* guitar music to follow something that was straight-ahead guitar music."

In many ways, this is where the media broke the ground for electronica's early grave—the second some know-it-all critic gave a stack of dance music niches one homogenous name. As it turns out, the American public was mostly interested in dance tracks that played like rock or hip-hop songs, rather than the intricacies of jungle, house, techno, and trip-hop. Remember the "Buzz Clip" status of songs like "Block Rocking Beats," "Setting Sun," and "Firestarter"? How about MTV's *Amp* show and its accompanying compilations? The trajectory of electronica's rise and fall somewhat mirrors *Amp*'s greenlight in 1996 and eventual cancellation in 2001, as KoRn and Limp Bizkit captured the interest of frat boys and future Tiësto fans. While the heavy metal-centric show *Headbanger's Ball* was killed in 1995—just before electronica's supposed takeover—and resuscitated in 2003, *Amp* has never seen a resurgence in any way, shape, or form.

#### WE ARE THE NIGHT

"We wanted machines to sound like they were sweaty and deranged and wild—things people associate with rock music," explains Tom Rowlands, one-half of The Chemical Brothers (alongside Ed Simons). "[Our first official single] 'Leave Home' wasn't named after a Ramones record for nothing!"

"We didn't do this in a misguided hope of attracting people who didn't like dance music," Rowlands continues. "It was just how we wanted to make records. We love acid house, techno, hip-hop, My Bloody Valentine, Skinny Puppy, New Order, psychedelia—all these things feed into our approach when we are in the studio."

The brash eclecticism of 1997's *Dig Your Own Hole*—Schooly D samples! Fractured folk from Beth Orton! Jonathan Donahue, oh my!—couldn't keep the Chems from enjoying their sole gold record in the U.S., but their continual evasion of easy categorization has gone over most people's heads in the years since. So much so that Rowlands told me he was pretty much over doing the American leg of the press/tour dance in 2005, around the release of their *Push the Button* full-length.

"The hard facts of it is that there's a whole world out there which is more switched on to electronic music at the moment," says Rowlands. "As from the start of our band, we go and play where people want to see us—our gig is complicated and expensive to put on so if we can play to 15,000 people in Milan on a Tuesday night as opposed to 1,500 in St. Louis, then I think the decision really becomes obvious. That's not to say it won't change. Maybe the success of Daft Punk

at Lollapalooza will persuade promoters that two guys with some synths, computers, and a light show can entertain a big crowd just as well as a traditional rock band."

#### DROP THE BEAT

Karl Hyde isn't so sure. "A bunch of kids showing up with machines doesn't look like real music to some people," he says. "It's not that blood, sweat, and tears. [It] didn't help our cause that we chose machines over guitars, drums, and rocking out. Plus we were white kids making dance music, which is a pretty confusing picture. It's hard to get excited about two guys behind banks of machinery, unless those two guys are The Chemical Brothers."

"Music in the United States has always been artist driven, driven by faces and personalities," adds Moby. "Apart from maybe The Chemical Brothers and The Prodigy, electronic dance music has been made by faceless producers in bedroom studios. That's part of the beauty of the scene, but music being so anonymous makes it hard for corporations to get behind it."

Of course, this isn't always true—one could argue that its precisely electronic music's anonymity (and frequent lack of lyrics) that makes it so suited to sell things like cars and films. But even if an electronica act like Dirty Vegas made top dollar off Mitsubishi—who used the duo's "Days Go By" in their 2003 "girl-pop-locking-in-an-Eclipse" spot—that doesn't necessarily translate to big commercial success. In fact, many pioneers seem to feel the music industry didn't push the genre hard enough—perhaps it's just that they didn't know what they were pushing. Certainly, it's easy to understand why major labels might have been hesitant to recruit a revolving door of pasty beat conductors, many of whom wanted nothing to do with anything but the dancefloor.

But, *XLR8R* reader, did you ever really want this music to go totally mainstream?

"I don't," says Howlett, when I ask him that same question. "It's meant to be underground and in the clubs, where people are taking drugs and escaping."

"Rick and I used to say dance music in the late '80s and early '90s was 'more punk than punk,'" explains Hyde. "Because kids were making music in their bedrooms on their computers and filling warehouses with 10,000 people, not just a squat with a couple hundred. The cool thing about the scene is it was no big deal. It was one foot in front of the other—sell more 12s, tour, get on with it. For goodness sake, MTV didn't matter to us. In fact, the problems came when they started to play our music."



We first mentioned Moby in a review of his *Ambient* disc in September 1993 (#5). In issue #9, we pontificated on whether or not, according to side-by-side photos, Moby and Sven Väth were the same person.



# PORTISHEAD

PORTISHEAD FINDS THAT SECLUSION, SOUL-SEARCHING, AND SOUR TIMES ARE ESSENTIAL TO PUSHING THEIR ENIGMATIC SOUND FURTHER.

It felt absolutely, resolutely endless. Gothic grey streaks and storm clouds splayed for miles across the Bristol, U.K. skyline, comprising the daily view from Portishead's perch at the top of band member Adrian Utley's stately, two-century-old Georgian house.

Camped out in the top two floors of studio space, the band was entrenched in an interminable stretch of music-making, broken occasionally by talking, fiddling with vintage instruments, and drinking tea.

Progress was slow, and the trio was frustrated. They pined for ideas and concepts, abstracts which often felt as tangible as white sand slipping through bony fingers. The self-imposed pressure was evident. When the group first approached Island Records about making another album—their first new material in nearly a decade—in early 2007, they had seven finished tracks. A year later, they were back down to six.

The band struggled to find a new sound—one that didn't just revisit the dark trip-hop blueprint that made them famous—while grappling with unease at the state of the modern world and its wars.

"I feel like Rowdy Roddy Piper in *They Live*," says band member Geoff Barrow of his sense of

disconnection from society. "I feel that if I put glasses on, I would be surrounded by a bunch of aliens."

## UNEASY LISTENING

The making of *Third*, the band's third real full-length, may sound like the musical equivalent of Sartre's claustrophobic play *No Exit*. Frustration was nine-tenths of the album, confirms Barrow. But isn't that, in some way, the perfect set of conditions for a band whose music has always sounded a bit tortured and uneasy? Portishead emerged in the mid-'90s with their own soundtrack of gritty beats and dark, smoky, painstakingly sculpted atmospheres—they sounded as enigmatic, somber, and damned as the double agents from the spy movies they occasionally sampled. The trio was a perfect union of an unlikely grouping of musicians: Geoff Barrow, a young hip-hop head and denizen of Bristol's bustling recording studios; Adrian





"FUCK PERFECTION, I JUST WANT TO GET IT IN TUNE, OR OUT OF TUNE."

– GEOFF BARROW

Utley, a jazz guitarist who had once toured with Big John Patton; and Beth Gibbons, then and forever a mysterious, 21st-century torch singer, blessed with a voice and inflection that sounds beautifully cursed.

Utley and Barrow met in a recording studio in 1993—Utley was in session with a jazz band, and Barrow, in an adjacent room, was trying to sample his breaks through the walls. As the two started working together, it was clear they possessed a different chemistry and sound than their peers. Utley remembers fellow Bristolian Mushroom, a founding member of Massive Attack, coming into the studio where they were recording. "He said, 'What are you doing? What the fuck? You're *playing* that music?' He had no idea you could do that. He came from just records and sampling."

The trio added vocalist Gibbons and set forth their own gothic take on trip-hop with 1994's *Dummy* and 1997's *Portishead* (and again with a 1998 live album, featuring strings from the New York Philharmonic). The pressure to create a new chapter of this wildly influential trilogy made the new record a stressful journey. Nonetheless, *Third* finds the group reinventing themselves without repudiating their past. It's an exquisite record of motorik rhythms, dread-inducing beats, and oscillating, off-key electronics—all without samples.

"I wanted it to sound like some weird live recordings from the Amazon," says Barrow. "I wanted it to sound like it struggled."

#### UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

On his blog, Geoff Barrow wrote that making this album was like watching *Lost*. Like that post-modern mobius strip of a television show, *Third* has roots in Sydney. In early 2001, Utley and Barrow entered a small recording studio in Australia, intent on making Portishead tracks. Both arrived from radically different places, having taken their own routes since the band burned out after its last tour in 1998. Utley dove into soundtrack work, scoring *The Sound of Claudia Schiffer*, a Nicolas Roeg documentary. Barrow got a tattoo, his name in a graffiti font on his arm. It signaled an end and a beginning—after getting divorced and feeling tired of making music, he decamped to Australia and helped found the Invada record label.

"I couldn't find anything I was into," Barrow explains. "I couldn't find anything to say musically. I felt like I was on autopilot."

Utley joined Barrow Down Under and worked for a month, putting together about six or seven tracks, which Utley describes as being "quite soundtracky." But it wasn't quite clicking. Barrow said it was more about feeling they had to do it, not that they wanted to do it. They scrapped all the tracks—none appear on the new album—but a seed had been planted.

A short while later, Utley found himself back in the English countryside, holed up in a cottage in Dartmoor with Gibbons. The wind was howling, it was pissing rain, and





"THERE'S SUCH AN ODDNESS TO US, BUT THAT DOESN'T WORRY ME,"  
— ADRIAN UTLEY

The approach to making this album was more communal and less static, employing much more instrumentation—Barrow played drums and keys, Gibbons contributed some guitar, and Utley strums a ukulele on “Deep Water,” inspired by the Steve Martin film *The Jerk*. This time around, the group creates real imperfections and oscillations instead of restructuring pockmarked samples. “I’ve got nothing against creative sampling,” offers Barrow. “But I feel weird about sampling nowadays, like people should have moved on and started writing their own shit by now.”

Barrow, who is dyslexic, doesn’t have a real visual sense to his production—he sees studio time as a chance to “turn his eyes off.” “When I do interviews, I hear the word ‘perfectionist’ a lot,” says Barrow. “And to me, it seems just the opposite. You’re struggling to get something that sounds good, or kind of good, or even okay. Fuck perfection, I just want to get it in tune, or out of tune.”

There is something more that Barrow is searching for, though—he’s always striving for a sound that has presence and space. “The edge is the most important thing,” he states. “For me, that’s the otherworldly thing, the unknown quantity, the glue. When you sample something, the glue already exists, because it was probably recorded in some great orchestral room. It’s that mystery.”

#### ODD FELLOWS

Last December, Portishead premiered their new tracks at All Tomorrow’s Parties’ Nightmare Before Christmas festival, which they curated. The three of them were much closer, artistically and geographically, than they’ve ever been, and there was a palpable sense of looseness and relief on stage. Parts of *Third* were finally exposed, and it seemed that all the exhausting conversations, painfully long nights, and musical soul-searching had been worth it, if not essential to the process of being Portishead.

“We’re an odd band,” states Utley. “There’s such an oddness to us. But that doesn’t worry me.”

Portishead’s *Third* is out now on Mercury/Island. [portishead.co.uk](http://portishead.co.uk)



Our first Portishead review appeared in #13. Writer Matt Lemcio dubbed their “Sour Times” 12-inch on Go! Beat “goth hop.”

# XLR8R TV



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Confessions of a Shoe Ho





# MAKING A SCENE

WHY?'S YONI WOLF AND PUNK ICON BOB MOULD EXAMINE THE MEANING OF "DO IT YOURSELF" THEN AND NOW.



WORDS [KEN TAYLOR](#), PHOTOS [MATHEW SCOTT \(WHY?\)](#) AND [JOSH SISK \(BOB MOULD\)](#)



Since his days as the lead singer and guitarist in Hüsker Dü, the Minneapolis-based band that was synonymous with U.S. hardcore punk of the early '80s, Bob Mould has defined what it means to be “indie.” A child of the internet, Yoni Wolf of hip-hop experimentalists Why? took a different path to underground success. But despite their dissimilar origins, Mould and Wolf acknowledge there are universal truths and commonly shared experiences to “doing it yourself.” We brought the two together to see if, even with 20 years between their respective starting points, much has changed in the independent scene.

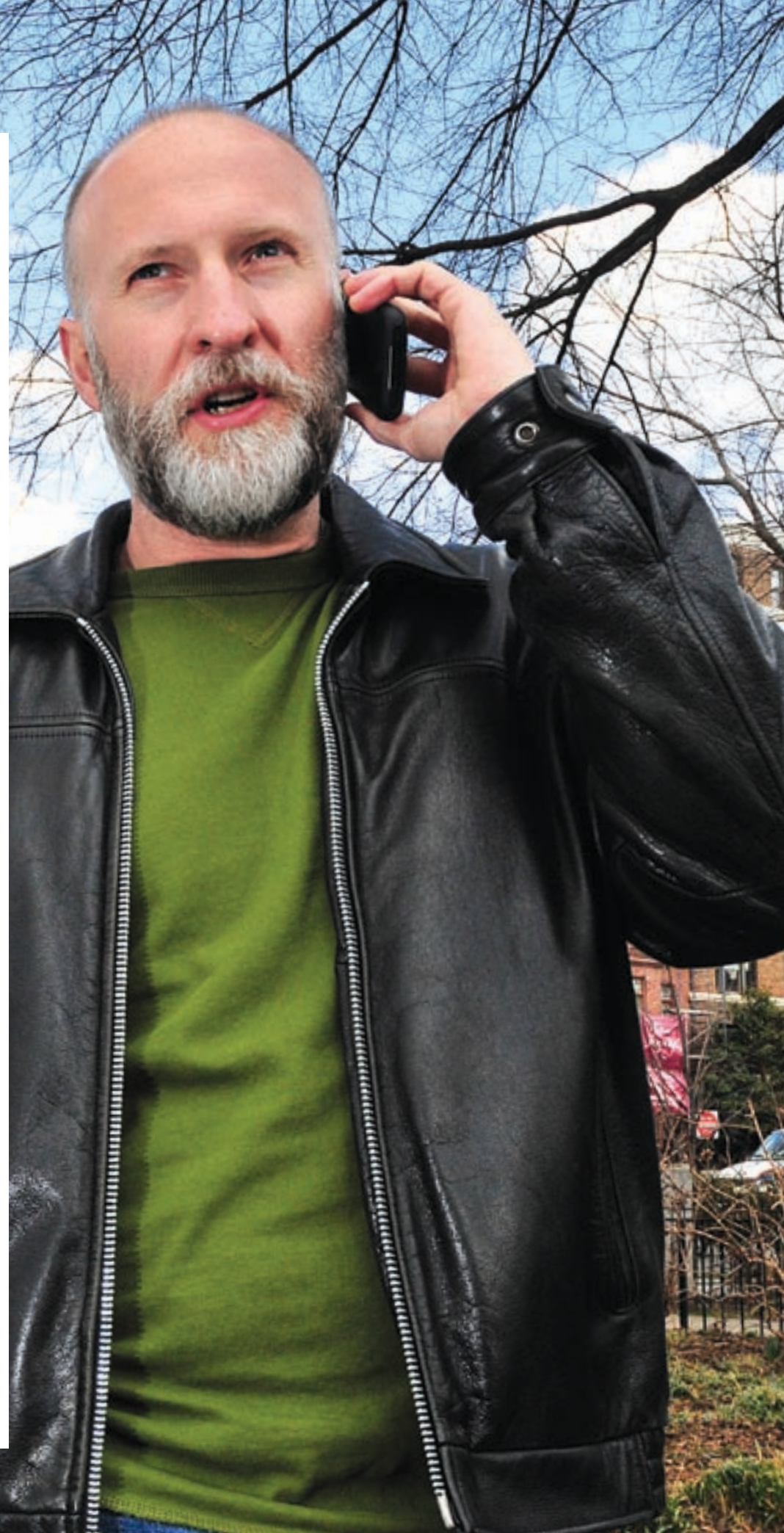
***XLR8R*: If it's possible to summarize, how do you think the indie scene has changed in the last 30 years?**

Bob Mould: I'll go with my entry point, which was as a fan in the late '70s in the first wave of punk rock, and seeing the different components involved in that. It seemed like the common thread (which was one that I could identify with) was, 'I really hate everything that the mainstream has to offer me right now, and there's a number of ways to rectify that.' As a musician, the goal for me was to change things, to make them more the way I would want them to be, or just make them different. I think that sort of implies “independent” in and of itself, whether it's releasing your own records or creating an alternative environment to work in.

Yoni Wolf: It's interesting to hear Bob say that. I'm more insular, or within some sort of bubble. Bob set out to do something, in a way. For me, it's always been [that] each song is like a quick fix or trying to figure something out... more so than trying to add to the general good of society or the music world, which Bob has definitely done. I've never been able to think that far outside of myself.

BM: Have you ever found yourself creating alternative spaces to do performance or just different ways of working that don't fall into what the world thinks of as, “Oh, this is how music is presented”?

YW: I went through a period of trying to find alternative ways to have shows that don't rely on selling alcohol. But that's a different thing. I was thinking more about songwriting, but I guess it's all tied-in in a way.



BM: For me, my songwriting sensibilities were so traditional, despite the fact that the first wave of punk seemed so unique and so different... At the time, I was a kid of '60s pop music. I always thought that melody was important and that kind of stuff. The early Hüsker Dü stuff might not appear that way, but maybe it sounded that way in my head as it was going by [*laughs*].

YW: I came from the same [thing]. My dad's records—that's the same stuff that early on got me going. I only got into Hüsker Dü in the last year. I was in Minneapolis recording our last record and we recorded at this studio called Third Year... Tom Herbers was the engineer, and he has this great photograph of a Hüsker Dü show in '82 or something like that. You're out front playing and he's about three feet from you. There's a spotlight on him as a 16-year-old kid [*laughs*]. It's a great photo.

BM: [*laughs*] Tom's a great guy and I know the exact photo of which you speak.

YW: He kinda hipped me to the stuff and so that's where I come at it [from]. I mean, I didn't get into modern rock music until like four or five years ago, something like that. You know, indie rock. [I was into] anything before the '60s and '70s (that old stuff that my parents got me into) and then I was sorta into rap music.

***XLR8R*: I had thought you had come from more of an indie-rock background, only insofar as the stuff you guys make as a hip-hop group is definitely not traditional. When, listening to hip-hop, did you diverge onto this way left-of-center path?**

YW: It's similar to you, Bob, when you were saying the early Hüsker Dü records don't sound like '60s melodic pop but you thought you were doing that in a way. The same thing happened with me with rap music... I didn't know if it was normal or what, but it was my version of what I was hearing just filtered through my brain and coming out of my unschooled sense of music. I guess it was the same thing for me and [only later] when everyone talks about it do you know that it's totally different.

***XLR8R*: That early-'80s DIY scene was known for setting up its own networks and working under the radar, touring in cities that normally wouldn't see tours. I wonder how much that has changed now, and what's remained of setting up these communities at the grassroots level.**

BM: This is the good stuff to me. This is the stuff that will never happen again and will always happen again, and I'll get into why. If you go back to the early '80s, just look at where the technology was. No internet, no cell phones. People were truly separated by time and distance... And this is totally gonna start sounding like Dennis Hopper or something, but in Minneapolis there was a punk rock bar and when you got tired of playing the punk rock bar, you could rent a VFW hall for 50 bucks. And you could drag a PA up a couple flights of stairs and you could do whatever you wanted to do inside that room. And that was what created community outside





“For me, each song is like a quick fix.”

—Yoni Wolf



of the norm. That is where everybody got to express themselves and everybody could have 20 minutes as long as they helped out. And that's community and that was a real beauty. We didn't know, in 1980, that everybody else in the rest of the world was doing it as well. None of us knew... And then there were those few bands that were the real pioneers that went out and spread the word and made the connections for everybody. I think about Black Flag and the Dead Kennedys... It was insane and there was no, like, “Oh, I'm totally into synthetic goth disco. I'm gonna Google up the other seven people in the world that are into it.” This was this thing that took a lot of time and effort and community to build. I don't know if that could ever happen again, but it always happens. I think for all of the technological advancements and sort of the weird disconnect, I still do believe in community. And the dampness and the smell of a live music experience where everybody's sharing...

YW: My experience has a certain parallel sensibility about it but is so much a product of the late '90s when I was starting to do stuff and it was about the tape trade in indie—I'm hesitant to say “underground hip-hop” but that's really what it was at the time for us, where we were isolated, all of us around the country in our own bedrooms making records on four-tracks and whatnot and then dubbing tapes and sending them. The internet had a large part [in this phenomenon]. This probably sounds like hell to you, Bob, because it's really the exact opposite of what you're saying.

**XLR8R: But it's still a community-building exercise.**

YW: It *is* a community. It was really interesting. All these remote participants in this fairly broad community of kids who couldn't wait to get their hands on the newest tape of the most revolutionary rapper that you could hear, or someone that had some style that just sounded odd and awkward and beautiful that you had heard about on some message board somewhere and [then wondered,] “How can

I get hold of this tape?” [and it's like,] “I'll send you a fifth-generation copy but it's mostly just hiss and the guy's vocals might poke out a little bit and you might hear a snare drum.” That was my experience and it was beautiful.

**XLR8R: Speaking of the internet, Bob, you're into blogging these days. What's been your experience with it, as far as connecting with fans? Can it replace meeting people face-to-face?**

BM: For 25 years I sort of kept my business to myself and just dealt with the work, and over the past four years with the blogging, I've sort of pulled the curtain back and shown people, like, “Look, I'm pretty content with my life and content to share a little bit more now. And look, it's really not that thrilling [laughs]: Here's where I shop, here's where I go to the gym, here's where I socialize with my friends.” I definitely don't have any stalkers because everybody knows where I am.

YW: It's not exciting for a stalker. How can they get excited if they know?

BM: I don't mind sharing general information like that if it helps to frame me as a person who makes this work. It's also had a nice effect where some of the mystery is gone. Some of the people projecting and personalizing my work even more than I would... it's diffused that a little bit, which makes things a little more casual and sort of cool as I get older.

Why? *Alopecia* (Anticon) and Bob Mould's *District Line* (Anti-) are out now.

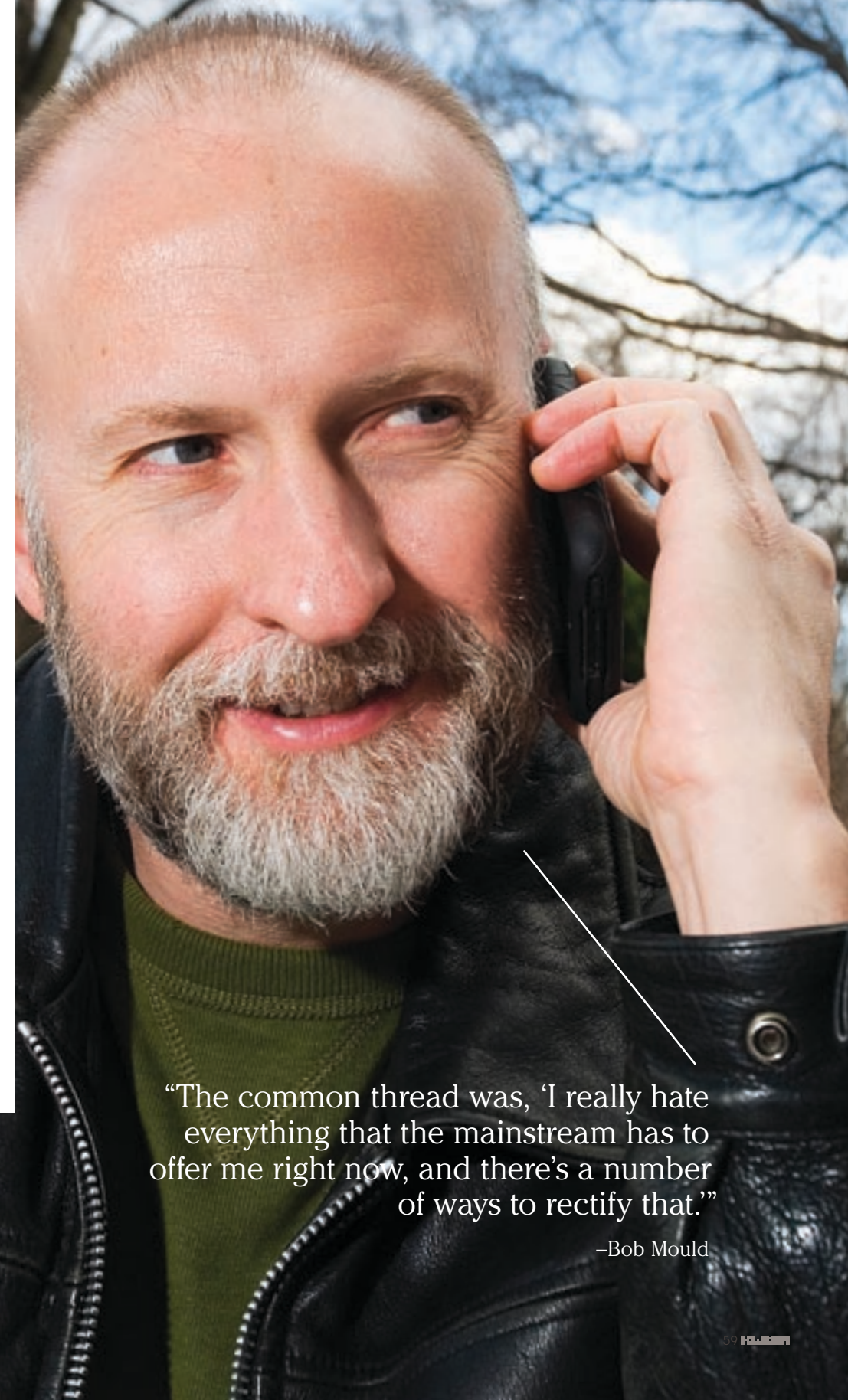
[myspace.com/whyanticon](http://myspace.com/whyanticon), [bobmould.com](http://bobmould.com)



Our first phone feature, moderated by writer Scott Thill, appeared in May 2005 (#87), and featured Jaga Jazzist's Lars Hornveth discussing rock and jazz deconstruction with The Mars Volta's Omar Rodriguez-Lopez. To read the complete article, go to [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).



To read outtakes from this interview, visit [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).



“The common thread was, ‘I really hate everything that the mainstream has to offer me right now, and there's a number of ways to rectify that.’”

—Bob Mould



DON'T

STOP

THE  
NOISE

DANCE ROCK'S NEW NEW WAVE MIXES UP ROCK AND ELECTRONIC INTO FAST, FURIOUS FORMATS.



Our first dance-rock feature was in December 2002 (#64). We profiled The Rapture, Q and Not U, Radio 4, and !!!, with a brief mention of Glass Candy, who've since reinvented themselves as nu-Italo-disco royalty.



# CUT COPY



MELBOURNE'S DANCE-POP MOOD  
MASTERS GO FROM BRIGHT NEON  
LOVE TO HAZY GHOST COLORS.

WORDS TYRA BANGS

Critics love to talk about Cut Copy in relation to other bands. Reviews of the band's 2004 debut, *Bright Like Neon Love*, repeatedly referenced Human League, Fleetwood Mac, and New Order's Bernard Sumner, whom lead singer Dan Whitford sometimes sounds like. No doubt their newest record, a shimmering pop gem called *In Ghost Colours*, will invite comparisons to ELO, Jean-Michel Jarre, and Hall & Oates.

Whitford is only too happy to lay bare his influences. "I'm really into the music of the late '70s, from disco to middle-of-the-road pop music, and the early synthesizer stuff that preceded new wave," he says from the L.A. office of Modular Records, the dance-happy Australian imprint the band calls home. What Whitford hints at, and his records make clear, is that Cut Copy is more interested in mood than outright meaning—their music skillfully evokes bygone eras and emotions without actually ripping them off.

Melbourne-native Whitford, a coffee lover and huge *Ghostbusters* fan, is a graphic designer by trade, which definitely shows in the band's painstaking attention to detail, the stylishness of their songs, and their eye-catching record covers and live shows. Cut Copy began in 2001 as Whitford's solo instrumental hip-hop project, but the influence of French house (Alan Braxe, Motorbass) and electro-loving friends like Bang Gang DJs and Midnight Juggernauts slowly crept in. By 2003, he had recruited

friends Mitchell Scott and Tim Hoey to play drums and bass, respectively. "The thing that appealed to me was just that DIY aesthetic," says Whitford. "I just thought, 'Why don't we try to put together this Sonic Youth-style garage band and cover the songs that I've written in the studio?' and it sort of evolved into what it is now."

On the new record, the band indulges Sonic Youth-esque moments of catchy guitar feedback on "So Haunted," and you can hear echoes of shoegaze's flanged vapor trails on the carefully crafted interludes that string one track to the next. But what's really revealed on *In Ghost Colours* is Cut Copy's talent for pop songwriting. "On this record, I definitely became more comfortable with vocals," admits Whitford, who recorded the album in Manhattan with the DFA's Tim Goldsworthy (the previous record was tweaked in Paris with Cassius' Philippe Zdar). "I've always been a fan of records with lush vocal arrangements and the Californian pop sound, like the Beach Boys and America. During 'So Haunted,' we just kept layering and layering more harmonies, and once we actually muted the track it sounded like Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody' in the chorus. That's a sound I love that isn't captured by any other instrument but the voice."

Cut Copy's *In Ghost Colours* is out now on Modular.  
[cut-copy.blogspot.com](http://cut-copy.blogspot.com), [modularpeople.com](http://modularpeople.com)

# DOES IT OFFEND YOU, YEAH?

A STEAMROLLER OF RUM, SYNTH RIFFS,  
AND SCREECHING PUNK RHYTHMS.



WORDS CAMERON MACDONALD

The first music that Reading, England's James Rushent and Dan Coop made together was a dangerously caffeinated electro experiment thrown together on an old bedroom computer that made awful beeps. They then released the noise on a humble MySpace page for their mates to enjoy under the name Does It Offend You, Yeah?, a phrase they heard someone say on TV. Not long after, Rushent and Coop had a Sony BMG contract, recruited two more members (drummer Rob Bloomsfield and American Morgan Quaintance, who plays guitar, keyboards, and sings) at a pub, and found themselves performing for thousands at Japan's Summer Sonic Festival. Bassist/vocalist Rushent compares the entire experience to "walking around in a haze," saying that he was in disbelief until he found himself in a major label office. "I didn't really believe it until they played one of our tunes and nodded along to it, smiling," he recalls. "I was like, 'Oh my God, they actually do mean us!'"

DIOYY's electro-rock sound exists in a gray area where a surly and distorted synthesizer matters as much as a Fender coughing up feedback. While they share the hedonism and bombast of French electro (Daft Punk,

Justice, the Ed Banger label), their on-stage moxie (fueled by a good bottle of rum) aims to one-up any rock band. This is best encapsulated on their single "We Are Rockstars," which grinds up asthmatic synth riffs, garbled robotic vocals, and stumbling punk rhythms, and reeks of a hundred party crashers shoved into a living room. "We just want people to have some fun at the shows—drink a load of beers and jump around," says Coop, who plays keyboards. "We really feed off the audience reaction so we go out there to steamroller people and get them involved."

One peculiar moment on their aptly titled debut album, *You Have No Idea What You Are Getting Yourself Into*, is the garage-rock romp "Attack of the 60 Ft Lesbian Octopus." Rushent admits that the band was fighting off the ghosts of Seattle grunge and The B-52's when they were writing it. "We started off trying to rip off Nirvana," Rushent offers, "and then we had to restrain ourselves from playing 'Rock Lobster.'"

*You Have No Idea What You Are Getting Yourself Into* is out now on Almost Gold.  
[doesitoffendyou.com](http://doesitoffendyou.com)



For what offends Does It Offend You, Yeah?, check out [XLR8R.com/117/extras](http://XLR8R.com/117/extras).



# LATE OF THE PIER



SILVER CAPES AND SAMPLER-MASHING  
STRAIGHT FROM CASTLE DONINGTON'S  
FRESH-FACED UPSTARTS.

WORDS BRUNO NATAL

Yes, Late of the Pier is another weirdly named band of British 20-somethings, totally hyped though they don't even have record out yet. Your first reaction might be just to ignore them. But praise from Digitalism, and Erol Alkan's involvement in producing that yet-to-be-released album, might be enough to get you to one of their gigs. And that, my friend, may lead you to the center of a kaleidoscopic, psychedelic, noisy, stop-start dance-rock maelstrom, where you'll find yourself surrounded by 18-year-olds and wearing a pair of band-distributed "rainbow trippy goggles."

On stage, Late of the Pier has so much going on at the same time that it's almost hard to describe: silver capes, metallic guitar riffs and screams, frenetic, MPC-triggered 8-bit effects, post-punk drums, distorted disco basslines, and layers and textures from synthesizers that have been carefully placed in golden foil-wrapped boxes. And all of these elements are neatly rolled into recent singles on their Zarcorp label, including "Bears Are Coming" and "Bathroom Gurgle" (a remix of which shows up on the latest taste-making Kitsuné compilation).

"I think a lot of people that hear us are interested because it just sounds a little odd; familiar but... just slightly odd," explains bassist Andrew Faley. "That confuses them into listening to us a bit more. And that's where we sink our musical claws into them."

The foursome's live set-up—guitar, bass, drums, two synths, and one

MPC—came together naturally, says Faley. "We originally played just straight bass, drums, and guitar. We all listened to a lot of electronic music, from The Prodigy and Daft Punk to Lamb, Chris Clark, and Autechre, but never really thought about playing it as a band. Sam [Eastgate, the guitarist and lead vocalist] was sequencing, sampling, and producing electronic music himself and eventually the two collided."

The Midlands-based band finally decided to add electronic elements into its sound after a group outing to Cut Copy's first U.K. gig. "They were using an MPC-1000 sampler live. Next week, Sam bought one off eBay and [keyboardist Sam] Potter went from playing one key on a keyboard in one song to mashing a sampler [into] everything we do," says Faley.

If it all falls apart, there is a plan B. "Ross [Dawson, the drummer], is going to be a gravedigger after LOTP, and Potter wants to be a glass blower," explains Faley, who's obviously been given the task of remembering the band's retirement plans after some drunken night. "Sam's going to collect glass that Potter's blown. We'll all still be connected though—I'll make a film about Ross' grave-digging, for which I'll use special glass lenses in the camera. These I'll buy off Sam, who'll have collected them from Potter." And the band played on...

[myspace.com/lateofthepier](http://myspace.com/lateofthepier)

# THE TEENAGERS

THREE 20-SOMETHING FRENCHMEN  
BECOME THE VOICE OF A GENERATION ...  
JUST NOT THEIR OWN.



WORDS ALI GITLOW

Fittingly, The Teenagers met in high school in the bucolic town of Sèvres; just six miles outside Paris, it's an area more famous for porcelain manufacture than indie-pop bands. Every Saturday afternoon, they would gather around to catch the latest installment of trashy American TV shows. Above all, they loved *Beverly Hills, 90210*. While Shannon Doherty's badass Brenda was the favorite of lead singer Quentin Delafon, he also had a soft spot for Tori Spelling. "She had the wonky boob thing," he muses lovingly. "That's what happens when you get your boobs done when you are 15."

The Teenagers have since parlayed this half-ironic taste for American kitsch into a viable career, cheekily expressing the nervy angst and budding sexuality of the tragically-under-21 set in songs like "Sunset Beach" and "Starlett Johansson." Not bad for a band that was accidentally conceived during a drunken winter's night in 2005 by Dorian Dumont (guitars/synths), Michael Szpiner (bass), and Delafon, who had never even thought of making music before. MySpace success and a bidding war followed, and the group ended up on cool-kid British label Merok Records (who also discovered Crystal Castles and Klaxons) before being offered an album deal by XL Recordings.

Their debut LP, *Reality Check*, carefully preserves the DIY aesthetic of their French demos, though they've since moved to East London and begun working with a producer named Lexx. Dumont wrote all the music on the record, but the wanton, sexy lyrics—which express the unbearable lightness of being underage—are a collaboration between all three members. On

"Fuck Nicole," the first track they recorded, Delafon channels *Transformer*-era Lou Reed, talk-singing about a self-obsessed girl destined to OD from too much partying. Their signature tune, "Homecoming," tells the story of an international romance gone wrong with an unforgettable chorus: "I fucked my American cunt," says a blasé Delafon, followed by a sweet-voiced American girl, who counters "I loved my English romance."

The guys have adapted to being onstage quickly—they've been touring like mad and aren't stopping anytime soon. On stage, a mustachioed Delafon embodies the sweeter side of the sleazy Frenchman stereotype with his quirky dance moves, charming audiences in their young 20s and, when venues allow, real live teens. "I think they have less boundaries about behaving socially and they want just to have fun and jump around," says Delafon of their fondness for playing to the under-21s.

While their signature sound is more rooted in rock 'n' roll thrash, The Teenagers—who have been remixed by fellow Kitsuné-ites Passions, Guns 'N' Bombs, and Tepr—are proud supporters of the homegrown electro scene. "It really gives a new credibility to the French music," Delafon says. Their association with the Gallic dance revolution may have helped their popularity, but they've got their own niche: soundtracking pimple-faced make-out sessions the world over.

*Reality Check* is out now on XL/Beggars Banquet.  
[theteenagers.net](http://theteenagers.net), [xlrecordings.com](http://xlrecordings.com)



# THESE NEW PURITANS

BRITAIN'S NEWEST ILLUSIONISTS CONJURE UP WU-TANG-INSPIRED ATTACK ROCK.



WORDS PATRICK HISSON

British band These New Puritans are enigmatic. Or at least they attempt to be. “We approached the band like casting a spell,” states frontman Jack Barnett. “We’re more magicians than musicians.”

Eccentricity has been a hallmark of the four-piece since they formed in 2005—and having a demonstrative pronoun in their name is just the start. The band’s hyped debut, *Beat Pyramid*, overflows with cryptic phrases and song fragments that are constantly repeated and referenced. When Barnett repeats the line “Every number has a meaning” on the jittery “Numerology,” he hammers home a lyrical conceit and a numeric obsession. On “Sword of Truth,” he mutters something about “riding the airwaves,” and occasionally seems to be in the middle of his own esoteric radio broadcast, uttering phrases that fall somewhere in between nonsense and coded message.

Barnett is a devoted Wu-Tang fan, and while his hometown of Southend-on-Sea is far from Staten Island, he shares the rap group’s obsession with conspiracies, double meanings, and hidden objects. At one point the band members even toyed with the idea of naming their debut album *Liquid Swords*, a GZA tribute that would have befitted their aggressive sound: an amalgam of post-punk riffs, warning-siren synths, and jarring, shouted lyrics that Barnett describes as “attack music.”

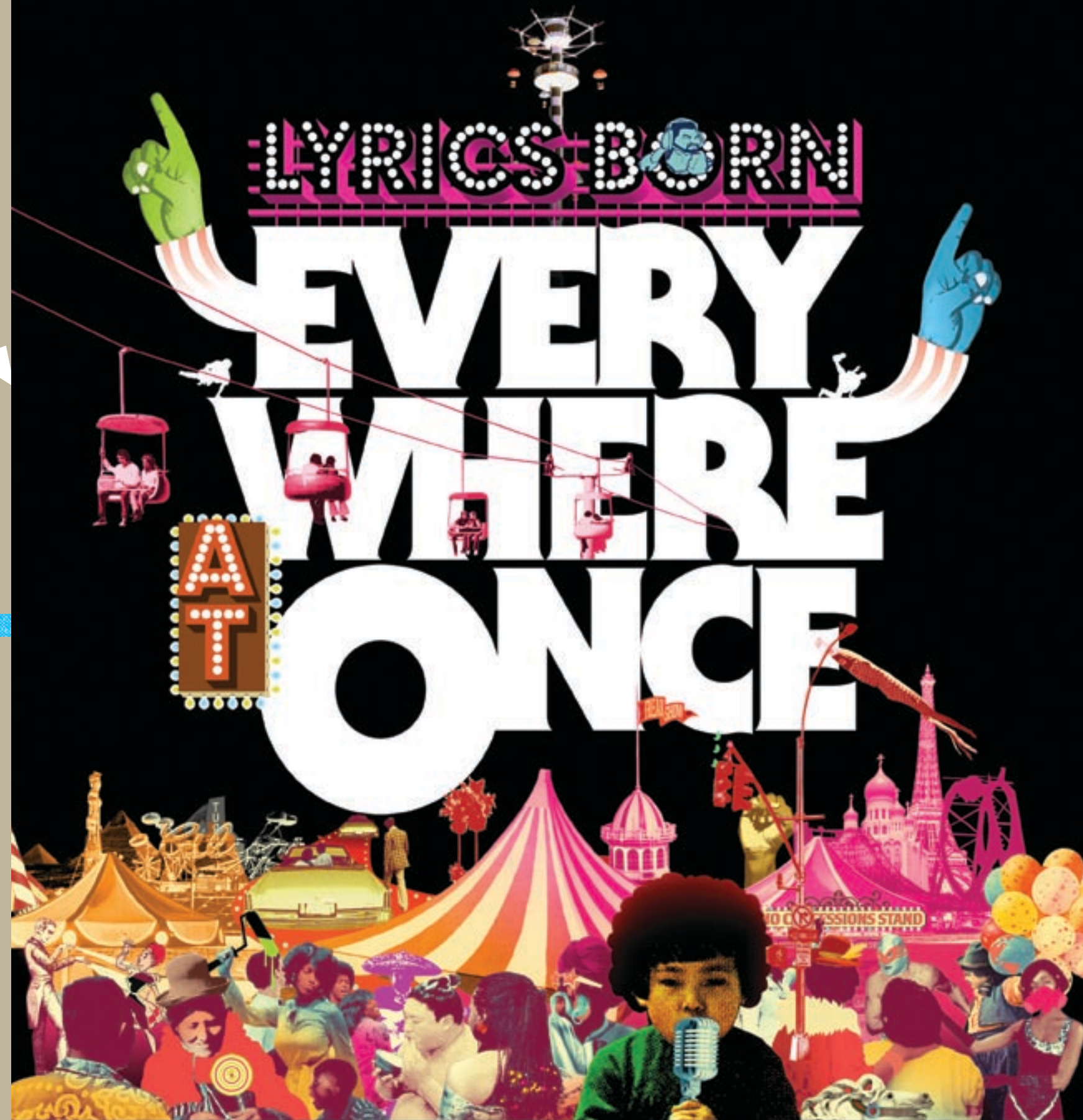
Produced by Gareth Jones, who has worked with Wire and Liars, *Beat Pyramid* fashions the sounds of scraping knives and

field recordings from shooting ranges into bludgeoning rhythm tracks. Post-industrial angst courses throughout in the form of snarling guitars, mechanical rhythms, and a piston-like bass lick on “En Papier.” Other tracks like “Colours” build to ecstatic crescendos, fitting into the song template established by groups like Bloc Party and Klaxons.

Initially, the album was supposed to be even weirder. Originally conceived as a tribute to London, it was going to contain field recordings from different parts of the city—when the locations were plotted on a map, the resulting shape would be an infinity sign (a reference that appears frequently in the group’s music videos). This sort of high-concept mysticism can come off as cute affectation or something more “meta,” but unlike Wu-Tang, Barnett doesn’t believe in conspiracy theories or numerology, merely viewing them as “useful ideas.”

So is there a reward for fans who sift through the album’s clues and half-truths? “They’ll achieve a spiritual calm,” says a droll Barnett. “Or not.”

These New Puritans’ *Beat Pyramid* is out now on Domino. [thesenewpuritans.com](http://thesenewpuritans.com)



The highly anticipated all-new studio album from LYRICS BORN featuring the single  
**'I Like It, I Love It'** Available 4.22

on tour this spring ANTI.COM / MYSPACE.COM/LYRICSBORN / YOUTUBE.COM/LYRICSBORNTV



FOR 20 YEARS, CHARLES WEBSTER HAS HELD IT DOWN  
FOR THE TRUE DEEP HOUSE SOUND,

# LONGWAY

Charles Webster was around for the original rise of house music in the U.K. He has seen it ebb and flow, through the mania of the superstar-DJ era of Sasha & Digweed to its fade back into the underground. But Webster's own richly melodic, subtle take on the genre has quietly endured, even as other sub-genres have grabbed the headlines, then disappeared.

His remixes have the deft power to become the definitive version of tracks (as is the case with his re-rub of Justin Martin's "Sad Piano") while the round, effortlessly smooth tones of his songs belie a moody edge, a melancholy funk that lives beyond trends.

Now that true deep house—is making a comeback, Webster is busier than ever. "There definitely seems to be an upswing," Webster says over the line from his studio in London. "I'm getting more bookings and offers for remixes, but I just ignore [the ups and downs]. I don't see what I'm doing as any particular style—it's just what I do. I think that's how you can maintain a long career, by ignoring any certain scene. Basically, I've been making the same music for 20 years and it's fantastic that it's becoming more popular after all this time."

Webster has become a mainstay of the British

house scene, so it's only fitting that main-room label Defected recently released the first proper retrospective of his work, a three-disc affair that includes one mix of his own productions, one of his favorite house tracks, and one featuring music that has inspired him throughout his career (from Black Sabbath to Kate Bush). After selecting personal favorites, Webster actively sought out fans' favorite tracks, trawling online forums to see what people lusted after. He gleefully anticipates destroying the eBay market for particularly hard-to-find gems, such as a 2001 remix of UBQ Project's "When I Fell in Love," originally released in 1992. "It's often the tracks you don't really think are so good that are the ones that other people think *are* really good," he marvels.

The UBQ track is one of several on the comp, like his 2003 re-work of the 1991 classic "Soul Magic" by YBU, that highlight Webster's longevity. After playing



"THAT'S HOW YOU CAN MAINTAIN A LONG CAREER,  
BY IGNORING ANY CERTAIN SCENE."

in various bands around Sheffield in the 1980s, he moved to Nottingham, where he was exposed to house via locals like Graeme Park and foreign luminaries such as DJ Pierre. A gig as a recording engineer followed, after which he came into his own as a producer in the early '90s with releases under the names Sine and Megatonk.

Following the Brit invasion of the Bay Area, Webster alighted on California in 1993, where he launched his Love From San Francisco label with essential tracks like "Want Me Like Water," featuring a 16-year-old singer by the name of Terra Deva. Three years later, he was back in the U.K. with even more DJ gigs, plus an album deal with Pagan Records as Presence while his remix of Dr. Rockit's "Cafe de Flore" for pal Matthew Herbert was burning up dancefloors. In 2002, he finally released a full-length under his real name; *Born on the 24th of July* (Peacefrog/Strata) expanded upon the less club-focused vibe of Presence's *All Systems Gone*, and revealed Webster's talent for songwriting.

Webster describes his sound as "electronic," but this does little to encapsulate his gently funky basslines, smoothly shifting synth pads, and meticulous layers of production, all synchronized to an emotional groove at once immediate and complex. Longtime collaborator Terra Deva sees his influences in her own work. "Sophistication is something I always keep available in my bag of tricks," she says, "but Charles always insisted on it, which kept me and house music on our toes. Charles keeps it beautiful and artful and simple-sounding, but even if you knew what expertise went into it you could not duplicate it."

"I've never really made hands-in-the-air soulful house," concurs Webster. "My stuff's always had a moodier edge to it. I don't think I've ever made a happy record, ever. It's like Steely Dan—never wrote a love song in eight albums!" Webster does admit that last year's "All Over the World" single, under his popular Furry Phreaks alias, is not exactly gloomy. "If Defected is releasing it as a single, they must see some sort of crossover potential beyond moody house heads," he acknowledges.

The Defected re-release didn't feature Jazzanova's wonderfully clanking, ominous remix—that was reserved for Webster's own Miso label, which releases at a glacial pace: just seven carefully chosen records in the past five years.

With his "Influences" disc for the Defected compilation making unlikely bedfellows out of Plaid, D'Angelo, and Tom Waits, perhaps it's not a surprise that Webster has another far-ranging project in the works: a big band. Together with longtime friend Pete Wraight (who worked with Matthew Herbert), Webster is presently finishing an album (at Abbey Road Studios, no less) of "pure, full-on jazz with electronic twists." He's also got another solo artist album in the can, which will focus more on slower tempos and other genres. "It's a bit frustrating [that people say], 'Oh, you do house music,' when so much of the music I do isn't house. But I guess it's always the first thing that you're known for [that] sticks. I'm working with Shara Nelson from Massive Attack; I did stuff with Tracey Thorn on her album, which was basically classical music. There's all kinds of interesting things [happening]," Webster chuckles. "It's just that house music, at the moment, pays the bills."

Defected Presents Charles Webster is out now.

defected.com misorecords.com



Charles "Phurry Freaks" Webster appeared in December 2002 (#64), in an early version of our Tour Diary feature. He snapped pics of a teddy bear on the beach in Australia, at the ballpark in San Francisco, and with Derrick, a 75-year-old blues and reggae DJ, at the U.K.'s Big Chill Festival.

CHUCK CHILL-OUT

Mr. Webster details five influential tracks from his new compilation.

**The Cranberries** "No Need to Argue"  
(Island, 1994)

"I'm not at all religious but this song makes me feel like I ought to be. It reminds me of special times."

**Kate Bush** "Army Dreamers"  
(EMI, 1980)

"It is such a beautiful but sad song on the futility of war. Partly why I chose it was for Bush's perfect vocal delivery."

**Deep South** "Believe"  
(Musk, 1993)

"This track for me always should have been a big pop hit. It has a very underground vibe with a perfect pop song in there."

**Patti Smith Group** "Frederick"  
(EMI, 1979)

"I remember this track from when I was a kid. It always makes me want to cry because it's just full of love."

**Vashti Bunyan** "Rose Hip November"  
(Dicristina Stair Builders, 1970)

"This one is another throwback to childhood because I grew up around folk music. This track has such an apocalyptic vibe to it, innocent yet at the same time knowing."



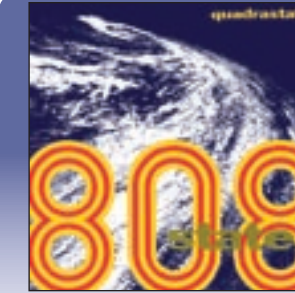
**ROD MODELL**  
*Incense & Black Light* CD

Producer **Rod Modell** (Echospace, DeepChord) is a minimal techno producer and also founder of DeepChord Records in Detroit. His Plop debut sees him sonically exploring seedy night temples, red-light districts and opium dens with psychedelic dub delays, sub-bass and fat slabs of alien atmosphere. Ideal 3:00 AM headphone listening.



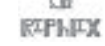
**PITA**  
*Get Out* CD

This newly remastered version of **Peter Rehberg's** second full-length will absolutely scramble your brain. *Get Out* "...stands as the first major musical laptop statement in the same way that **Hendrix's** Are You Experienced? spoke for the most extended instrument specific modes of the electric guitar."—**David Keenan**



**808 STATE**  
*Quadrastate* CD/2LP

Reissue of **808 State's** 1989 release, remastered and appended with bonus tracks, thus completing Rephlex's re-releases of 808's trilogy. Originally released on Creed Records, these tracks were born in Manchester after the second summer of love, and with its fresh, undated, organic sound, this is a taste of the real acid house.



**VLADISLAV DELAY**  
*Anima* CD

Re-release of this classic 2001 album, originally on Mille Plateaux. *Anima* is a single electronic opus of over 60 minutes – a continuous mix that slowly reveals itself as something beyond audio design, unpredictably shifting gears while revisiting certain themes for coherence. Includes a 2008 collage/remix of the original as a bonus track.



**JENNIFER CARDINI**  
*Feeling Strange* CD

This is Paris-based **Cardini's** Kompakt debut – the first female artist to appear on the label. Continuing with her mission to turn thousands of new faces on to great music, *Feeling Strange* is a seamless, heady and personal mix of yesterday and today's finest tunes. With tracks by **Rework**, **Maurizio**, **False**, **Apparat** and many more.



**DELON & DALCAN**  
*Tanz* CD

*Tanz* is the debut full-length release by this pair of DJs, sound artists and mainstays of the Nimes house scene, and it's a sound full of warmth and full of grooves, in spite of its apparent technoid features. Addictive minimal stompers perch next to classic French house to form a perfect ecosystem where everything has its own place. Thrilling.



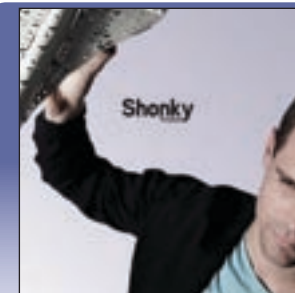
**FUCK BUTTONS**  
*Street Horrsing* CD/2LP

Debut full-length by this Bristol, UK duo, now on a major tour and taking the world by storm. Like some unholy marriage of **Whitehouse**, **Spacemen 3** and **MBV**, *Street Horrsing* fuses tribal beats, beautiful melodies and in-the-red vocals painting a space-boat cruising into the galactic navel.



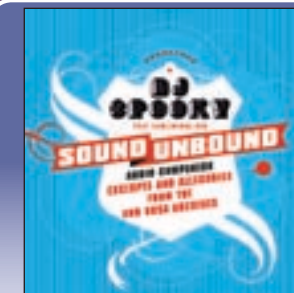
**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*Poker Flat Volume 6: Dead Man's Hand 2CD/2x12*

Following up strong releases like **Trentemøller's** *Last Resort* and **Bets'n'Bluffs**, **Pokerflat** strikes again! CD1 of *Dead Man's Hand* is a fantastic label comp assembled by label CEO **Steve Bug**, while CD2 is a stomping mix by Germany's inimitable **Clé**. Featuring tracks by **Jeff Samuel**, **Aril Brikha**, **Guido Schneider** and many more.



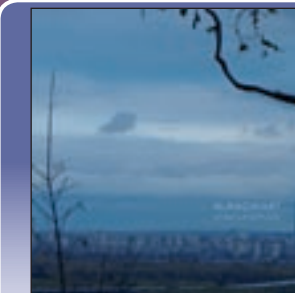
**SHONKY**  
*Time Zero* CD/2x12

**Shonky's** debut full-length is full-on hypno-techno with roots in the sound of Detroit and West Coast house. After tipped releases on labels like **Mobilee** and **Freak 'n Chic** and DJing at superclubs **Panoramabar** and **Weetamix** his profile has soared, and with *Time Zero* he transcends the hype with a deep, sexy, jackin' future-classic.



**DJ SPOOKY** *Sound Unbound: Excerpts and Allegories from the Sub Rosa Audio Archives* CD

**DJ Spooky's** follow-up to 2004's highly-acclaimed *Rhythm Science*. Once again he plumbs the **Sub Rosa** catalog for his source material for the ultimate continuous mix-up – an audio essay that links artists as diverse as **Marcel Duchamp** and **Allen Ginsberg** with music by **John Cage**, **Carsten Nicolai**, **Philip Glass** and many more.



**KLANGWART**  
*Stadtlandfluss* CD/LP

After an 8-year studio hiatus, the German duo of **Markus Detmer** and **Timo Reuber** return with *Stadtlandfluss*, once again charting the waters between composed and improvised electronic music, between "very quiet" and "extremely loud." For fans of **Terry Riley**, **Steve Reich** and **Pierre Henry**.



**FENIN**  
*Been Through* CD

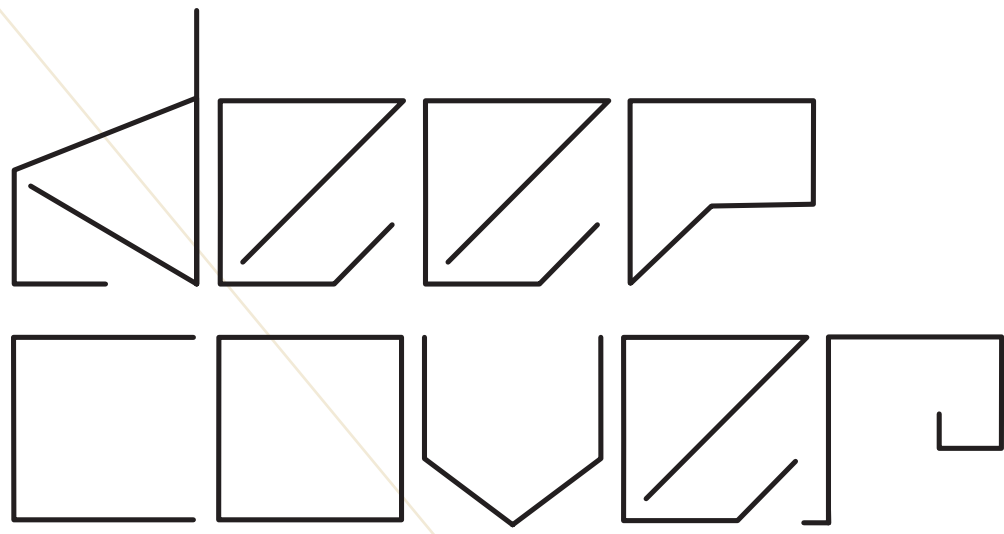
*Been Through* is **Fenin's** second full-length release on **Shitkatapult**, and here he refines his sound, stepping beyond the dub-techno circus and 4-to-the-floor beats with the use of subtle breaks and the rhythms of dubstep and dancehall. Guest vocalists include **Ghana's Gorb**i and **Jamaica's Scorcha**.



These titles available at fine independent record stores or online at [www.forcedexposure.com](http://www.forcedexposure.com)

Retailers: request wholesale information from [fe@forcedexposure.com](mailto:fe@forcedexposure.com)





A LOOK AT OUR FAVORITE **12" ART** FROM THE EARLY 1990S.

Once upon a time, when e-commerce was just a glimmer in some programmer's cerebral cortex, long hours were spent in record stores searching for the perfect beat. And thinking back to the days before electronic music was split into 200 or so niche genres, 12" sleeve graphics were one of the best ways to figure out which records you might want to buy. As DJs, nostalgic old fools, and lovers of design, we decided to dig up a selection of classic record covers, thus forming a time portal back to the early '90s... without all the dust. *Vivian Host*

SPECIAL THANKS TO BRANDON IVERS, JASON LEDER, MONTY LUKE, AND BEN STEIDEL, FOR THEIR HELP WITH THIS PIECE.

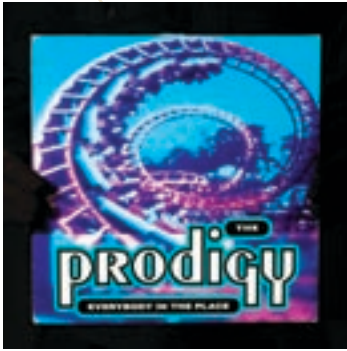


**SL2**  
*DJ's Take Control*  
ZYX  
1992  
Designer unknown



Before he became XLR8R's managing editor, Ken Taylor (who modeled the covers that follow) was a PR man for the Plus 8 and Minus labels. His first contribution to XLR8R was in June 2001 (#50) when he reviewed a documentary about the first DEMF (which never came out).





**The Prodigy**  
*Everybody in the Place*  
XL  
1992  
Sleeve by Unknown Partnership



**Kaotic Chemistry**  
*LSD EP*  
Moving Shadow  
1992  
Designer unknown



**Eon**  
*Inner Mind*  
Vinyl Solution  
1991  
Sleeve by Pierre



**Eon**  
*Spice*  
Vinyl Solution  
1990  
Sleeve by Pierre



**Hyper-On Experience**  
*The Family We Never Had*  
Moving Shadow  
1993  
Sleeve by The X-Tradinair Flytronix



**2 Bad Mice**  
*Hold It Down*  
Moving Shadow  
1991  
Designer unknown



**Radioactive Goldfish**  
*L.S.D. is the Bomb*  
Majii/Cheetah  
1991  
Designer unknown



**Baby D**  
*Let Me Be...*  
Production House  
1992  
Sleeve by Bouncing Ball Design



**4Hero**  
*Cooking Up Ya Brain*  
Reinforced  
1991  
Designer unkown



**Altern 8**  
*Hypnotic ST-8*  
Koolkat/Network  
1992  
Sleeve by Elena Massucco



**Destroyer**  
*Senses*  
Target  
1991  
Sleeve by Geert De Wolf



**The KLF**  
*Justified & Ancient*  
Arista/KLF Communications  
1992  
Sleeve by Designland

## Trevor Johnson

Though he's best known for his work with **A Certain Ratio**, Manchester-based Trevor Johnson, who is now 50, designed the covers of **808 State's** *Newbuild* EP, the "CübiK" b/w "Olympic" single, and 1991's groundbreaking *ex:el* album as half of Factory Records design team Johnson/Panas. *Vivian Host*



### What was the inspiration behind the *ex:el* cover?

I recall the typographic look was taken directly from the vernacular composition of the (TDK) demo tape of the album the band provided us to listen to. We looked at the packaging of cassettes and presentation of information as an aesthetic principle and expanded upon that. This was the opposite of the usual procedure of designing a 12" sleeve and then reducing it to fit all formats (7", CD, cassette). It was still early in the use of computers for graphic designers and the swirling 808s were an experiment in perspectives, which were eventually hand-rendered because it was beyond the capabilities of the technology of the time!

### What is your feeling about 808 State?

808 weren't profiled as often as some of the other bands, but they were all very clever and creative individuals who let the music speak for them. Looking back, there were [a few] tunes which defined the atmosphere and captured the spirit of the culture of the city at a certain moment, and 808 State's "Pacific State" was one of those. There was this unforgettable, beautiful, haunting sound that they created that permeated the city for a while.

### Tell us a story about yourself in 1991, when *ex:el* was released.

I don't recall doing much music stuff after 1991 and *ex:el*. The Hacienda club was still going strong and was up to its ninth birthday, and Factory had opened a new bar, Dry201, and had introduced in-house designers by this time. Bands we were working with, like Electronic, were signing to major labels, independent Madchester was in decline, and the emphasis on our work shifted towards corporate identity.

### What do you think is an exceptional record cover design?

What excites me is where a graphic style defines a culture of a generation—Jamie Reid's work for the Sex Pistols stands out as globally significant, as does Peter Saville's Joy Division and New Order designs for Factory. I am a big fan of Manchester's Central Station, who designed for Happy Mondays, and I envy Reid Miles' body of work for the Blue Note label—the music just seeps out of those sleeves.

viamcr.com

To read more from this interview, visit [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).



# Dave Nodz

Dave "Nodz" Noddings started his career with a logo tee for Dan Donnelly's Romford, Essex dance music shop Boogie Times, and went on to define the culture of breakbeat 'ardcore with his iconic, graffiti-inspired sleeves for Donnelly's **Suburban Base** label. Fed up with the scene and drawing different iterations of a "guy behind decks," Nodz severed all ties and now lives in Spain—but his covers for the likes of DJ Hype, Danny Breakz, and D'Cruze live on. *Matthew Ingram*



### Were there any particular artists' work you loved?

My influences have always been comic book artists. Simon Bisley, whom I consider to be god—I have ripped up many a design cursing how good that guy is. His early black-and-white ABC Warriors series artwork for *2000AD* is perhaps my biggest direct influence, as well as his Lobo series, and a myriad of awesome covers. Jamie Hewlett's style is brilliant. I have a lot of his early work, and I think he also gave me a quite disturbing crush on Tank Girl. I love his clean, simplistic style that he has now honed to his amazing work with Gorillaz.

### How did you do your work?

I had trained for a couple of years as a paste-up artist, so I was used to simple tools and methods such as Letraset (ha!) and copious amounts of Spray Mount. All I've ever used for any sleeve design, which I always produce in black and white, are a selection of black pens (sometimes a Rotring 0.5mm or even thinner), some cheap markers, pencils, and

Tipex for highlighting. The technology came along and was fine when used properly and subtly, but it's no good having loads of fill effects and Photoshop-style sleeves in the hands of the clueless.

### Which sleeves are you especially proud of?

I always have a particular fondness for QBass "Dancin' People." I used a lot of little graphic tricks and effects in that one that I'm still proud of. I'm not one for self-congratulation—you would never find any example of my work on my walls at home, for the precise reason that I would constantly be wanting to change things. On the "Dancin' People" sleeve, I still smile at the little running story I did to accompany the artwork and to set the tone; [it was] my attempt at being Frank Miller.

This interview, by Matthew Ingram, first appeared in 2006 on [woebot.com](http://woebot.com).



**MASH3D**  
*Buzz the Bass*  
Moving Shadow  
1991  
Sleeve by Fly Graphics



**Acen**  
*Trip II the Moon Part 1*  
Production House  
1991  
Designer unknown



**Altern 8**  
*Everybody Remix*  
Network  
1992  
Sleeve by the Bombheads



**Various**  
*From Our Minds to Yours, Vol. 2*  
Plus 8  
1992  
Sleeve by Richie Hawtin



**The Timelords**  
*Doctorin' the Tardis*  
TVT  
1988  
Designer unknown



**Foul Play**  
*Vol. 4*  
Moving Shadow  
1994  
Designer unknown



**The Prodigy**  
*Out of Space*  
XL/Elektra  
1992  
Designer unknown



**N-Joi**  
*Live in Manchester*  
Deconstruction  
1992  
Sleeve by Farrow



**Space Opera**  
*Call It Techno*  
R & S  
1989  
Designer unknown



**Various**  
*Fuck Off and Die*  
Shut Up and Dance  
1992  
Sleeve by A-Z Music Services



**Digital Boy**  
*1-2-3 Acid!*  
Flying  
1991  
Sleeve by P. Squeglia



**The House Crew**  
*The Theme*  
Production House  
1993  
Sleeve by Zeitgeist





**Blame**  
A:21  
Moving Shadow  
1993  
Designer unknown



**Cosmo and Dibs**  
Star Eyes  
Moving Shadow  
1991  
Sleeve by Fly Graphics



**Altern 8**  
Evapor 8  
Network  
1992  
Designer unknown



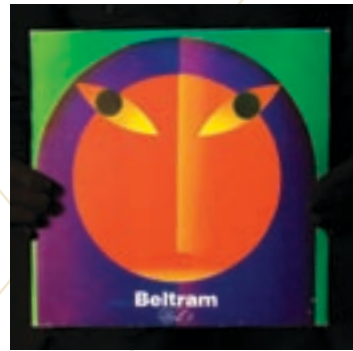
**The Future Sound of London**  
Lifeforms  
Virgin  
1994  
Sleeve by Buggy G Riphead for EVB



**The Orb**  
Little Fluffy Clouds  
WAU! Mr. Modo/Big Life  
1990  
Sleeve by Designers Republic



**Altern 8**  
Full On...Mask Hysteria  
Network  
1992  
Sleeve by Elena Massucco



**Joey Beltram**  
Beltram Vol. 1  
R & S  
1990  
Designer unknown



**Various**  
Relics: A Transmat Compilation  
Transmat/Buzz  
1993  
Sleeve by Third Earth



**Various**  
Techno-1  
KMS  
1989  
Sleeve by Normski Anderson



**LFO**  
Love is the Message  
Tommy Boy  
1991  
Sleeve by Erwin Gorostiza



**Messiah**  
Temple of Dreams  
Kickin  
1992  
Sleeve by Junior Tomlin



**The Prodigy**  
Charly  
XL/Elektra  
1992  
Sleeve by Jay McKendry

## Matthew Hawtin

A fondness for geometry, rationality, and linearity mixed with hedonism runs in the family for British artist Matthew Hawtin, the brother of minimal techno don Richie Hawtin. Matthew's paintings featured on releases for his brother's Plus 8 label, and in 2006 he participated in *min2MAX*, a show affiliated with Richie's current imprint, the Berlin-based **Minus**. *Vivian Host*



### Did you design the cover for *Dimension Intrusion* before or after listening to the record?

I can't remember what came first but I believe it was the painting; it was completed late in 1992, when I was in my second year of my studies. The painting is called "Into the Space," which goes with a track on the album. I was exploring hard-edge painting like the artists Peter Halley and Al Held, as well as investigating a 3-D space on canvas. There were actually three other paintings in that series. One was bought by some promoters from Paris, one was used on the 12" single "Train Trac" (released on Mute), and the other is still rolled up.

### Did you and Richie ever have artistic differences?

We never had fights about artwork; our last fight was around Grade 10 and it has been smooth sailing ever since. The artwork for the label was always a bit of collaboration, but in most cases Rich knew exactly what he wanted. Our aesthetic remains pretty similar in terms of design, architecture, food, etc., though I'm probably more flexible than Rich nowadays. He's still pretty rigid, which isn't a bad thing.

### Tell us an interesting story related to Plus 8.

I got into DJing [in the early '90s] and spun ambient in chill-out rooms. I would play four- to six-hour sets and my first DJ name was the Acid Guru! The parties we hosted for Plus 8 were pretty intense experiences to say the least. Ambient music also had a big influence on my thinking—it's too bad it's not appreciated so much anymore.

### What do you think are exceptional record cover designs?

I think Plastikman *Sheet One* and the original Concept series *96:01 - 96:12* are a great integration of music and design. The Global Communication album *76:14* still looks and sounds great. More recently, Goldfrapp's new album, *Seventh Tree*, sounds like it looks.

mwhawtin.com

To read more from this interview, visit [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).





FLASH  
of the  
SEMONS

**Photographer:**  
Shaniqwa Jarvis

**Stylist:**  
Liz Baca for The Goods!  
(gottagetthegoods.com)

**Make-up & Hair:**  
Paul Anthony Castro

**Models:**  
Andre, Daniel,  
Doug, Dree, Marc,  
Sean, Tiya

Special thanks to  
Reserve L.A.  
(www.reservela.net)  
and Joe of J.C. Jeans  
(Rose Bowl swap meet,  
Booth #3151.





Tiya wears blouse by Imitation of Christ (from Wasteland L.A.), bathing suit and bikini top from American Apparel, jeans by Hellz Bellz, and stylist's belts and accessories.

Daniel wears his own t-shirt, jeans by Cassette, sunglasses by Sabre Vision (available at Reserve L.A.), and his own accessories.





Doug wears sunglasses by Sabre Eyewear (available at Reserve L.A.), t-shirt by Riddim Driven, and stylist's accessories.



Dree wears hat from Santee Alley, vintage t-shirt and jeans by The Goods!, denim jacket by Hellz Bellz, vintage Wild Pair heels from The Goods!, and stylist's accessories.





Sean wears hat from Santee Alley, t-shirt by Riddim Driven, customized suspenders from The Goods!, and his own jeans, necklaces, and shoes.

Andre wears hoodie by 57thirtythree, vintage t-shirt from J.C. Jeans, Capital "E" Jeans by Levi's, and stylist's accessories.

Opening spread: Marc wears vintage captain's jacket from Wasteland L.A., t-shirt by Fresh Jive (available at Reserve L.A.), 514 Slim Straight Jeans by Levi's, and vintage Dr. Martens and belt from The Goods!.





**K'naan**  
The Dusty Foot  
Philosopher

**J'DaVeY**  
The Beauty In Distortion /  
Land Of The Lost



**Shaya**  
Fallen Awake

**Tanya Morgan**  
The Bridge

Eyezon - Finale - Truthlive  
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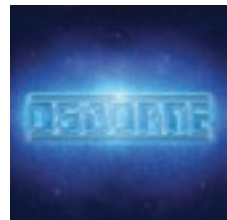
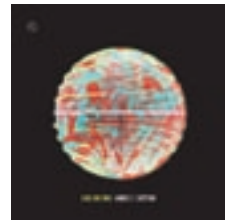
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# Album Reviews 5.08



## Osborne and James Cotton



### SPECTRAL OFFERS UP TWO NEW TAKES ON THE POST-RAVE SOUNDCLASH.

**JAMES T COTTON**  
**LIKE NO ONE**  
Spectral Sound/US/CD

**OSBORNE**  
**OSBORNE**  
Spectral Sound/US/CD

As Soundmurderer and SK-1, Todd Osborn and Tadd Mullinix attacked overproduced drum & bass with bomb-scare fury, re-fashioning classic ragga jungle into their own retro/not-retro creation. Now, a few years later, the two have pulled a similar trick with house and techno, but instead of sitting on the bare fringes of a too-far-gone scene, they're in the middle of their own zeitgeist. Based out of Ypsilanti, Michigan, a town 30 miles outside of Detroit, Osborn and Mullinix have given new meaning to the word prolific: No one else can claim to have their hands in so many different genres and not come off like dilettantes.

*Osborne* (mind the "e") is Todd Osborn's first full-length; his new material focused on a smoother, deeper aesthetic akin to the Balearic vibe that fueled Britain's 'ardcore uproar. It's a far cry from the typical Soundmurderer mash-up, but the move back through rave's lineage makes sense, given the history. The diva vocals on the velvet-roped anthem "Ruling" are the kind of thing Remarc or Nookie would have sampled during jungle's heyday—the soul-laden interlude before the crashing tide of amens.

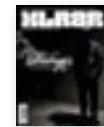
Luke Vibert and *Analogue Bubblebath*-era Richard D. James are another crucial component of Osborn's sound. The plaintive "5th Stage" and "There" are all jammed-out keyboard melodies, like a rock song in techno clothing; lo-fi and effortless, driven by rave urgency, these tracks are IDM before it had the name. Likewise, on the dancefloor-oriented "Evenmore," Osborn recalls Suburban Knight's "Art of Stalking" bassline, but makes it sound like warehouse-y British techno, full of Phuture Assassin dub alarms and cavernous, stutter-stop claps. It's "rave" in the classic, macro sense—the sort of thing people played before genre rules forced everyone to pick a side.

Differing from Osborn's inclusive approach, Tadd Mullinix's second album as James T. Cotton, *Like No One*, is strictly for the DJs—he makes no concessions to the home listener. Mike Dearborn's Chicago jack anthem "New Dimension" is an obvious starting point for Mullinix's sound here, heard in the murki-

ness of Roland drum machines smeared across dusty analog tape. But where Dearborn lets his melodies continually build, Mullinix cuts back and focuses on the hypnotic aspects of his grooves. "Don't Even Try It" is deceptively simple for that reason; the off-kilter drop-outs and flanged dynamics make rigid sequencing feel like a breathing thing.

Mullinix is also a fantastic collaborator, and D'Marc Cantu, DJ Traxx, Ellis Monk, and Osborn (as TNT) show up on "Like No One" to further the jak-beat agenda. Most notable is the track with Cantu under the 2AM/FM guise, "Sensational Rhythm." Built up over 10 minutes of circular chants, antique house rhythm, and acid bass, "Sensational" is industrial psychedelia at its most stripped-down, with the "hook" nothing more than a repeating, hypnotic shock.

When considering both albums as a whole, it's clear that Osborn and Mullinix share a deep reverence for classic house music, but where they jump off from those allegiances is very different. Osborn's strength is deep melody and slow building structure; he falls more into the Frankie Knuckles archetype of house-as-pop. Mullinix, on the other hand, follows Ron Hardy's lead—sweaty, psychedelic and raw, yet traditional in a noisy, rockist way. It's a separation that's likely at the root of why these guys are so good—their indulgences are balanced by each other, rooted equally in the past as in the future. *Brandon Ivers*



Ghostly International artist Tadd Mullinix (a.k.a. James T. Cotton) appeared on the cover of #97, as Dabrye, his instrumental hip-hop guise. To read the complete article, go to [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).





**THE BLACK DOG**  
**RADIO SCARECROW**

Soma/UK/CD  
Ken Downie has piloted The Black Dog for years without former bandmates Ed Handley and Andy Turner, but his new album, *Radio Scarecrow*, revisits the same “intelligent” aesthetic that the trio established together nearly two decades ago. It’s all moody stuff: sweeping ambient and melancholy washes pierce these techno rhythms, creating a clean, high-tech Detroit sound. More than anything, this vibrant nexus echoes the ebb and flow of the gritty cityscape: rugged bass and lean melody course through these tracks like surging electricity, powerfully fueling these mighty urban textures. Check the supple beauty of “EVP Echoes,” “Siiiiipher,” “Digital Poacher,” and “UV Sine,” each displaying an invigorating mix of stripped-down bass and gentle, spare atmospheric that strongly recalls early ‘90s techno on classic imprints like Warp (“Set to Receive” has a vintage Autechre synth line). A welcome throwback that only proves the enduring timelessness of thoughtfully composed techno. *Janet Tzou*



**AL KENT PRESENTS THE MILLION DOLLAR ORCHESTRA**  
**BETTER DAYS**

BBE/UK/CD  
Scottish disco junkie Al Kent can sucker you into believing that his orchestra’s tracks were salvaged from finger-smudged records found at a retired DJ’s rummage sale. The elements are all there: sashaying string sections and Latin piano riffs that introduce every bum who walks into the discothèque, hi-hat snaps, and the essential let-it-hang-out camp. “Don’tcha Wanna Get Down” and “Rock Freak Boogie” capture it all. However, Kent’s formula grows repetitive and loses its momentum over this hour-long album. Some tracks aren’t solid songs but rather raw breakbeat material to be picked and pulled apart by samplers. Still, there is much escapist fare to enjoy, and to lie about having found on a rare Danish disco LP. *Cameron Macdonald*



**BITCRUSH**  
**EPILOGUE IN WAVES**

n5MD/US/CD  
As the title suggests, this may well be the final album from Bitcrush (otherwise known as Mike Cadoo, former member of post-industrialists Gridlock and the founder of the n5MD imprint). With each album, Bitcrush has distanced himself from his electronic roots, and on *Epilogue*, Cadoo eschews glitch altogether for a glissade of guitars and grandiose drums. The difficulty is that mood alone cannot sustain a song, and Bitcrush often takes the sound of shoegazers like My Bloody Valentine or Slowdive into navel-gazing territory. Exceptions are found in songs like “Pearl,” an opalescent, 10-minute-long treasure that achieves the catharsis that at his best, Cadoo clearly is capable of. *Brock Phillips*

**BOREDOMS**  
**SUPER ROOTS 9**

Thrill Jockey/US/CD  
Over the last decade, no group has more convincingly and consistently replicated peak hallucinogenic experiences through sound than Japan’s Boredoms. The unparalleled highs continue on *Super Roots 9*, which contains a single 40-minute track titled “LIVWE.” Starting with angelic, male/female choral *aahhs*, bell-tree shaking, panning cymbal splashes, and booming bass drum, the piece gradually blossoms into a spiritualized whirlwind. Twenty-four massed voices ebb and flow, reaching heavenly heights of transport while three drummers generate galloping thumps with Olympian might. Earth’s greatest psychedelic band thus has created a masterpiece of gospel-tribal-interstellar overdrive that dwarfs all other musical efforts. By disc’s end, you’re convinced the Wagner-on-mescaline storm Eye & Co. have conjured could cure cancer and eradicate terrorism. *Dave Segal*

**CLARO INTELECTO**  
**METANARRATIVE**

Modern Love/UK/CD  
Manchester resident Mark Stewart’s work as Claro Intelecto fuses his hometown’s wintry austerity and vibrant Hacienda legacy into a mesmerizing, memorable sophomore album. These are thoroughly British techno songs: refined and melodically grounded with nods to Detroit’s and Berlin’s early-’90s sound as well as Warp’s warm electronic output. Aphex Twin and Black Dog cast shadows over the misleadingly titled “Harsh Reality,” a gentle track with watery synths that amble along like a country creek. Likewise, blissful numbers “Innocence,” “Operation,” and the spectacularly dubby “Dependent” instigate rhythmic hypnosis. Stewart’s arrangements retain a rueful, distant tone, like choir hymns drifting from a faraway cathedral. *Metanarrative* is a mysterious techno album that doesn’t have to be figured out to be enjoyed. *Tomas Palermo*

**CLINIC**  
**DO IT!**

Domino/UK/CD  
Though Clinic has released a string of credible records since 2002, the oft-masked Liverpoolian art-rockers famously haven’t won back the acclaim garnered by their stunning debut, *Internal Wrangler*. But with *Do It!*—an album that matches the urgency of its cheeky title—they’re a step further to reclaiming that praise. *Do It!* recalls the approach of fellow experimentalists Liars, who reined in their adventurous tendencies in favor of melody. *Do It!* also retains all of the band’s signature weirdness and genre exploration but introduces a new pop sensibility, due in part to producer Jacques King, who puts his stamp on the standout love trip “Emotions” and spooky closer “Coda.” *Joe Colly*

**CLOUDLAND CANYON**  
**LIE IN LIGHT**

Kranky/US/CD  
Cloudland Canyon is the ongoing collaboration of German-born Simon Wojan and Kip Uhlhorn, guitarist for Brooklyn noise rockers Panthers. Krautrock is a clear influence for them, but the duo doesn’t look to simply reenact the ‘70s German underground. On *Lie in Light*, their second LP, the band incorporates the era’s characteristic motorik sound with droning guitars and whirring synthesizers to make dizzying, atmospheric soundscapes. The album succeeds as a result of its seamlessness. Its songs—particularly “You & I” and the title track—are great, blending their components (Krautrock, shoegaze, field recordings) so finely that they’re virtually indistinguishable from one another. The result is a stargazing guitar record full of warmth and imagination. *Joe Colly*

**DIZZEE RASCAL**  
**MATHS + ENGLISH**

Definitive Jux/US/CD  
After the blah-est year in American rap history, the U.K.’s grime minister comes correctly ballistic with the first classic hip-hop album of ‘08 (despite it being issued overseas last year). The universality of ghetto tribulations is a recurring theme, whether it’s Diz explaining why he’s left his corner (“World Outside”), separating the real from the fake with Bun B and Pimp C (“Where Da G’s”), or waxing poetic about being a “*Blackfaced Cockney/Ever so cocky*” (“G.H.E.T.T.O.”). Microphone attacks come in jab-like flurries, riding roughshod over jarring beats that whine, growl, and shake with riot-inciting sub-bass frequencies. No longer a little Rascal, Dizzee makes the big-time MC grade while keeping his flow grimmer than Bill Sykes. *Eric K. Arnold*

**EMC**  
**THE SHOW**

M3/US/CD  
EMC’s *The Show* delivers enough classic boom bap to make rap nerds strap on their backpacks in search of a cipher and that mid-’90s feeling. Juice Crew veteran Masta Ace, Lyricist Lounge acts Punchline and Wordsworth, and Milwaukee MC Stricklin (the weakest link of the crew) combine their talents for this concept album that follows the quartet preparing for an out-of-town performance. Proving they’re still relevant with genuine chemistry and precise lyricism, the battle-ready MCs explore a range of topics while pulling the punchlines they’re known for over beats by hard-hitters such as 9th Wonder, Nicolay, and Marco Polo. Now if only they’d get rid of all those damn skits. *Zoneil Maharaj*

**TOMMY GUERRERO**  
**RETURN OF THE BASTARD**

Galaxia/US/CD  
I don’t know anything about Tommy G’s parentage, but the title of the S.F. skate icon/guitar hero’s latest solo effort could easily apply to his style, a hybrid of everything from surf’s-up mariachi to garage-y noise pop to lumpy-as-oatmeal funk to mellow Saturday-afternoon alt.dub. Whatever you call it, Tommy G has carved out an increasingly impressive musical oeuvre. Leaning more toward timelessness than predictability, *Return of the Bastard* sounds as dialed-in as Tommy’s ever been. It’s still fusionistic, spacey, and slightly experimental in approach, but there’s more of a sense of direction this time around. Guerrero’s gonna get there, alright, but he might just stop to smell the roses first. *Eric K. Arnold*

**GHOSTLAND OBSERVATORY**  
**ROBOTIQUE MAJESTIQUE**

Trashy Moped/US/CD  
Shiny capes? Check. Jerky dancing? Check. Drama upon drama? All check. Ghostland Observatory isn’t into subtlety, and the 2001-esque opener on their third album makes it clear they haven’t mellowed lately. Live, Aaron Behrens and Thomas Turner play a mix of grandiose rock and pounding electronic beats, but on this album, rock takes a definite back seat, with the layers of synths and beats piled thick. What keeps this from being yet another Daft Punk descendant, though, is Behrens’ voice. Think Freddie Mercury holding nothing back—truly, truly *nothing*—with maybe some Beth Ditto thrown in. All that said, the album is just an echo of their amazing live show. *Luciana Lopez*

**INDIAN JEWELRY**  
**WE ARE THE WILD BEAST**

Tigerbeat 6/US/CD  
Before they were Indian Jewelry, the Houston-bred, L.A.-based noise-rock group performed as NTX + Electric. *We Are the Wild Beast*, NTX + Electric’s sole full-length (reissued as an Indian Jewelry album), is based on ideas that came to frontwoman Erika Thrasher in a dream, and were written and recorded in the band’s kitchen in 2003. The album’s lo-fi aesthetic adds a certain moodiness to its noisy No Wave feel; from the skuzzy saxes on “Walk Through Fire” to the distorted bassline on closer “Fuckface,” the instruments blend together, thanks to the record’s ramshackle production values. Trends may come and go, and many have since this record was first made back in 2003, but it still sounds fresh. *Josiah Hughes*

**JASPER TX**  
**IN A COOL MONSOON**

Pumpkin Seeds in the Sand/US/CD  
With *In a Cool Monsoon*, Dag “Jasper TX” Rosenqvist tosses water on his listeners before tucking them back into bed. On opener “Still a Tiny Light,” pastoral guitar melodies slither between blasts of frying static, causing one to flinch whenever a peaceful chord rings. Sadly, the rest of *Monsoon* is too safe. Rosenqvist’s minimalist palette of listless guitar and accordion notes takes too long to finish its melodies, leaving the mind to wander and grow bored. There are few nice touches, like a peculiar moment where a microphone seemingly travels in a walking man’s pocket on “I Will Be Birds When I Die,” but avoid playing *Monsoon* half asleep on a freeway at midnight (like I foolishly did). *Cameron Macdonald*

**JEREMY JAY**  
**A PLACE WHERE WE COULD GO**

K/US/CD  
On his full-length debut, *A Place Where We Could Go*, Jeremy Jay, a Los Angeles-based singer-songwriter, flirts with 1950s-style mood and influences from all across the dial. The *oohs*, *ahhs*, and finger snaps on his lo-fi Richie Valens love songs can just as easily stray into Elton John-like pop piano territory or Link Wray-esque power chords. He’s a beautiful rebel from a Peter Pan storybook creating a garage-punk-tinged soundtrack to an old movie, and when he croons on “The Living Dolls” or the standout “Beautiful Rebel,” he recalls a more melodic Jonathan Richman. A step up from his *Airwalker* EP, *A Place* sees the indie pop gem transitioning into a more classic rock style with much originality. *Taryn Harrington*

**KASSIN+2**  
**FUTURISMO**

Luaka Bop/US/CD  
This album title was meant to be a bit of a joke—the songs here are unabashedly retro bossa melodies laid against lightly propelling percussion. But while Kassín+2 pays homage to their Brazilian roots, the album does have modern flourishes, including the toy-like sounds on “Quando Nara Ri,” the guitar riffs on the spacey “Ponto Final,” the quasi-surf-rock “Homem ao Mar,” and the electronic effects of “Samba Machine.” Sometimes, though, the songs don’t quite get past a bland sort of pleasantness, as on “Mensagem,” where a tad more actual futurism might have been helpful. *Luciana Lopez*

**KIDZ IN THE HALL**  
**THE IN CROWD**

Duck Down/US/CD  
Pushing substantial hip-hop to the public can be a tricky undertaking, which the Chicago/Jersey act Kidz in the Hall is well aware of. With their sophomore set, MC Naledge and producer Double-O spare some of the righteousness exhibited on their debut without necessarily dumbing it down. The bass-centric

“Drivin’ Down the Block” makes for the ideal summertime cruising anthem while the jazzy “Snob Hop” is a straight shot of lyrical flossing. Despite not making the most thought-provoking tracks, the Kidz accomplish exactly what they set out to do with style. The duo doesn’t always hit their target—which is painfully clear on the messy, R&B-tinged “Love Hangover”—but overall they’re one step closer to achieving mass appeal. *Max Herman*

**MAN MAN**  
**RABBITS HABITS**

Anti-/US/CD  
“*Pig’s feet and snake piss/Crow tongue and cat face*” bellows Honus Honus on “The Ballad of Butter Beans.” He’s describing a recipe for black magic, but he might as well be talking about his music. Man Man’s caterwauling carnival pop bubbles over with the arcane, the bizarre, and the downright repulsive. *Rabbits Habits*—the band’s third full-length—is their most focused, and most satisfying, yet. Now the quintet’s eccentricities—those random brass breaks, synth quakes, and vocal aches—are nestled cozily against hook-heavy, Tom Waits-indebted heartbreak. Check “Big Trouble” and the lusty, Rhodes-driven “Top Drawer” for the best of the sweaty bunch. *John S.W. MacDonald*

**MOCHIPET**  
**MICROPHONEPET**

Daly City/US/CD  
David Wang covered his eyes and pulled the trigger on his 2003 mash-up mix, *Combat*, where he caught Aphex Twin in bed with The Thompson Twins. In this collaboration with nearly 30 MCs, he has matured into a facile hip-hop producer. His breakcore roots still shine, and he fits every noise into the lyrical flow. On “Girls and Boys and Toys,”



**CURUMIN**  
**JAPANPOPSHOW**

Quannum/US/CD  
Brazilian musician Curumin’s second album is hard to classify, but in the best way: funk, psychedelic rock, hip-hop, reggae, dub, and more all co-exist on this album, sometimes even within the same track. The mix is a smart one, and it makes sense, considering Brazil’s history as a melting-pot nation. While Curumin plays most of the instruments here, he brings in some occasional help: labelmates Gift of Gab and Lateef the Truthspeaker flow on the harder beats of “Kyoto,” and DJ Marco scratches on the slice-n-dice “Salto No Vácuo Com Joelhada” and the loose “Saída Bangú.” There’s enough influence from Brazil’s musical past to keep traditionalists listening, but enough forward thinking to take the album into new territory. Hard to pigeonhole, but easy to enjoy. *Luciana Lopez*





**CUT COPY**  
**IN GHOST COLOURS**  
Modular/AUST/CD

Back when nu-rave was new, Cut Copy got blog-famous on the strength of a housey *FabricLive* mix and a full-length with "neon" in the title. But their sophomore offering, *In Ghost Colours*, reminds us that Cut Copy has a rock band side in there somewhere, too—DayGlo shellac or no. This time around, DFA's Tim Goldsworthy sprinkles his magic disco dust onto Cut Copy's glittering '80s synth-pop, massaging those beefy basslines and Modern English keyboards into something more human than before. Working around Dan Whitford's trilling, edgeless vocals, Cut Copy plumbs some new emotional depths, as seen in the lovely, sliding, Fleetwood Mac-esque guitar behind "Strangers in the Wind," or the sawed-off discord of "So Haunted." The party's still going strong, but they now know better than to say it'll last forever—and that makes it all the better.

Anna Balkrishna



**ROD MODELL**  
**INCENSE & BLACK LIGHT**  
P!op/JPN/CD

In the same rarefied vein of Porter Ricks' Arctic sounds, inhuman techno throbs on Rod Modell's *Incense & Black Light*. With *Incense*, the man behind Deepchord (and half of Echospace) plunges even deeper into the techno-dub void. This album is so icy and tar-on-coal dark, your brain will get frostbite listening to it (check the gyroscopically demonic "Temple"). "Aloeswood" sets the tone with muffled 4/4 kicks scudding like walruses over tundra while glaciers crackle in a polar cave. "Body Sonic" allows slivers of sunlight into the tenebrous mix; it's one of the few cuts among the 10 here that's more about moving asses than paralyzing limbs. *Dave Segal*

**NEW BLOODS**  
**THE SECRET LIFE**

Kill Rock Stars/US/CD  
*The Secret Life* is a promising rough draft. Within just 23 minutes, this Portland trio summons the ghosts of The Raincoats, The Slits, and various post-punk greats. So many elements click: contorted rhythms that stop and start on a dime, stark, minimal-

ist basslines that never waste a note, and Osa Atoe's violin melodies that shift between menace and comfort (best heard on "Doubles" and "The Cycle Song"). Unfortunately, the disc's vocals lack the same passion. They range from strained punk rage to flat dirges that often shortchange the lyrics. Still, the New Bloods have the potential to be an ace party band for any dank basement beneath a punk squatter's sleeping floor. *Cameron Macdonald*

**NOSTALGIA 77**  
**ONE OFFS, REMIXES & B-SIDES**

Tru Thoughts/UK/CD  
Benedic Lamdin makes a lot of noise for one man. Such is the mystery and depth of his ever-morphing Nostalgia 77 project, transforming from jazz orchestra to electro remixer depending on his mood. This two-disc collection features the best of both worlds. Disc One is dedicated to remixes, including his tweaks of TM Juke and Bonobo, as well as others touching up Nostalgia tracks—a brilliant reggaeified take on his cover of White Stripes' "Seven Nation Army" with Alice Russell on vocals and Povo's soulful transformation of "Wildflower" lead the way. Disc Two features his live band's handiwork, closing with a 22-minute rendition of "The Impossible Equation." Together they prove that Lamdin's creativity on stage and in remix mode is exceptional. *Derek Beres*

**PETE ROCK**  
**NY'S FINEST**

Nature Sounds/US/CD  
After 17 years of holding it down for the East Coast, Mount Vernon, NY's renowned rapping producer Pete Rock has still got the gusto to make soulful and streetwise hip-hop. And his latest LP is a testament to his staying power. *NY's Finest* is not a total triumph, though. Specifically, Pete's sampling wizardry occasionally dissipates when he rehashes used loops or digs up unimposing ones (like on "Comprehend"). But a little rustiness doesn't take away from the high points. The punchy, horn-driven "914" with Styles P and Sheek Louch sees Pete return to classic form, while the reggae joint, "Ready Fe War" with Chip Fu, is a welcome surprise featuring him flowing in patois. All in all, Pete delivers. *Max Herman*

**SONIC SUM**  
**FILMS**

Definitive Jux/US/CD  
Progressive Bronx-based act Sonic Sum released one of the most criminally slept-on albums of the indie hip-hop boom: 2000's *The Sanity Annex*. This atmospheric LP was followed up with *Films* in 2002, but to critics' and fans' dismay, it was only available overseas. To spare everyone the ridiculous import prices Def Jux is re-releasing Sonic Sum's sophomore set, which in comparison is more complex but not always as pleasing as *The Sanity Annex*. Frontman Rob Sonic's observational poetry is certainly more intricate yet his raps and production can become too jumbled. The best material comes when Rob and his crew-mates allow a little sonic breathing room, as they do on the outstanding and well-paced cinematic track "Negatives." *Max Herman*

**STARTING TEETH**  
**I WON'T DO ANYTHING I CAN DO**

Creaked/SWI/CD  
Not since David Byrne and Brian Eno sat shoulder-to-shoulder in the studio over 25 years ago for *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* have two minds captured the art of tape sampling so effectively as electronic producers Childe Grangier and Nathan Jonson of Starting Teeth do here. The twosome packs its tech-heavy debut, *I Won't Do Anything I Can Do*, with tape-jamming vocal loops galore, injecting sample after sample into their riotous blend of ambient world, glitch-hop, and micro-house. "Concerning the Bombs" is ice-toned with its whirs and drones, fizzling and flailing about like a downed power line during a thunderstorm, while the hyped-out "Everything Ends" hiccups with breaks, clicks, and cuts. *Chris Sabbath*

**TEAM ROBESPIERRE**  
**EVERYTHING'S PERFECT**

Impose/US/CD  
A potent blast of short, choppy dance rock, *Everything's Perfect* is a perfect dose of energized noise. From the whirlwind guitars of "Ha Ha Ha" to the synths-and-drums maelstrom of "Laika," Team Robespierre's breakneck sonics sound like what would happen if Milemarker experienced a head-on collision with The Minutemen. The sing-along stomp of "Black Rainbow" and "88th Precinct" could have been scooped up from *Freedom of Choice's* killing floor, while "Death Smells" should have been left there. And sure, Team Robespierre has a formula: Jam synths, call-and-response shouts, and kinetic rhythms into the blender, shred, and repeat. But it works just fine, and is far from boring, especially with lines like "*I want gasoline/Leave the lead in it.*" Smartasses. *Scott Thill*

**THE DRIFT**  
**MEMORY DRAWINGS**

Temporary Residence/US/CD  
One of the most promising bands to emerge in instrumental music, The Drift is done with ebbing—and seriously beginning to flow. Where their debut effort, *Noumena*, was, like the term itself, cerebral and independent, their sophomore record is sensual and inclusive, incorporating grooves and influences with skill. "Uncanny Valley" even boasts a backbeat, as well as the type of axe twangs and horn expo-

sitions that made Tortoise's *TNT* a thing of rare beauty. Meanwhile, "If Wishes Were Like Horses" is as much a cinematic sprawl worthy of Morricone as the 11-minute epic "Land's End" is reminiscent of Mogwai's earlier work. The Drift's challenging space-tracking may be an acquired taste, but I'm already addicted to it. *Scott Thill*

**THE EMBASSADORS**  
**HEALING THE MUSIC**

Nonplace/US/CD  
An international music team-up that produces everything from smoky jazz to hybrid reggae, The Embassadors created an earthbound spacewalk with *Healing the Music*. Led by the emotional vocals of Michel Ongaru, who transcribed Embassadors architect Hayden Chisolm's English lyrics into sung Swahili, the group's tracks, like the measured, slow-burning "Wimbo Wa Wana" and laid-back "Chema Chajiuzi," are addictive sonic exercises. The head-bobbing bass of "Tenda Wema Dub" would probably fill Angelo Badalamenti with jealousy, while the Caribbean bounce of "Jipe Moyo" just begs for some Dennis Alcapone toasting. It's as fascinating as it is chilled. *Scott Thill*

**THESE NEW PURITANS**  
**BEAT PYRAMID**

Domino/UK/CD  
Southend, England's These New Puritans arrive with a fair amount of *NME*-bestowed hype, thanks in part to a collaboration with designer Hedi Slimane, having created tunes for his 2007 Dior Homme runway show. Taking its sonic cues from acts like The Fall and Klaxons, the beat-driven indie-rock four-piece's debut here is a fashionable but unoriginal collection of tunes. The record's 16 tracks attempt to incorporate too many of-the-moment influences—electro, post-punk, experimental—without a unique (or coherent) vision to unify them. But there are some standout tracks: "Swords of Truth" is a fresh, DJ-set-worthy cut and the instrumental "Doppelganger" is also a winner. Taken as a whole, though, *Beat Pyramid* unfortunately sacrifices its shelf life for hipness. *Joe Colly*

**TICKLEY FEATHER**  
**TICKLEY FEATHER**

Paw Tracks/US/CD  
Annie Sachs makes music in her bedroom and this self-titled debut as Tickley Feather sounds just like you'd imagine. Rather than let production limit her, though, Sachs turns cheap synths, budget effects, and fuzzy four-track recording into an expansive, lush pop album. Naïve vocal melodies echo into the distance, keyboards howl like synthesized wolves, and a cheap drum machine keeps the strange, simple beats. The 20 short songs conjure everything from magic spells to dreamed-up parties, while child-like fantasies run amok. Despite selecting tracks from four years' of home recording, producer Rusty Santos mixes the album with remarkable coherence. Sachs' dreamy voice ties her songs together and allows for glimpses into the unreal without ever leaving the bedroom. *Wyatt Williams*

**UNWED SAILOR**  
**LITTLE WARS**

Burnt Toast/US/CD  
A full decade into their career, the rotating-member post-rock troupe Unwed Sailor has remained largely undiscovered. Based around the compositions of Johnathon Ford, known for his time spent with avant-hardcore pioneers Roadside Monument, the group abandons the crescendo-based hyperbole of their peers for some nuanced subtlety on *Little Wars*, their ninth release. Opener "Copper Islands" is guided by up-beat guitars and keys while the title track ebbs and flows with washes of synthesizers. As the album progresses, each song is given enough room to develop without being overshadowed by melodrama. *Josiah Hughes*

**WILDBIRDS & PEACEDRUMS**  
**HEARTCORE**

Leaf/UK/CD  
The couple in Wildbirds & Peacedrums met while studying music in Gothenburg, Sweden and before long they were playing shows and getting married. Comprised of just Andreas Werliin's unusual percussive talents and Miriam Wallentin's versatile voice, the duo plays with a notable sense of silence, inviting listeners' imaginations to fill in the rest. *Heartcore*, their unfortunately titled debut, ambitiously attempts many genres—soul, folk, jazz, pop—but the result is haphazard. The songs work best when Wallentin's soulful, layered vocals are the center of attention ("Pony") but the occasional missteps into free-jazz drumming and unfocused songwriting sound like two talented musicians who haven't yet found themselves. Let's hope the marriage works out. *Wyatt Williams*

**Y-LOVE**  
**THIS IS BABYLON**

Modular Moods/US/CD  
Yitz Jordan ciphers spirituality and political consciousness into hip-hop without losing awareness of musicality—essentially, teaching without preaching. For the most part he succeeds. His debut is a musically rich recording that matches his live presence well, where the stage is a theater for his poetic musings. His lyrics (sung in five languages) revolve around unity and understanding, especially regarding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. "From Brooklyn to Ramle" calls for recognition of "one race" while backed by a seriously banging instrumental, and "Bump" is an instant hip-hop classic in every sense of the word. The album sometimes lags with thin and dated beats ("Mind Transit," "New Disease"), but overall *This Is Babylon* is a welcome introduction to a revolutionary wordsmith. *Derek Beres*

**YELLE**  
**POP UP**

Caroline/US/CD  
French popster Yelle is about to become your new favorite thing. Her addictive debut album has finally made its way to the States, after spending the past six months tearing up clubs across Europe. Aided by friend and producer GrandMarnier, the young upstart wrings crunchy Justice-like tech-rock through a Cyndi Lauper pop filter, aided and abetted by bloopy synth riffs and her endearingly naughty lyrics (a particular hit verse translates to "I wanna see you in a porn flick, getting busy with your French fry-shaped dick") that lead to automatic grins as you shake that ass on the dancefloor—or in your bedroom. *Connie Hwang*



**EL PERRO DEL MAR**  
**FROM THE VALLEY TO THE STARS**

The Control Group/US/CD  
Sarah Assbring surprised many in 2006 with her self-titled singles collection. Arriving amidst a wave of similarly minded Swedish indie from pals like Jens Lekman and The Concretes, the album carefully balanced vintage girl-group harmonies with a dark, somber aesthetic. Her cover-model looks and dazzling voice didn't hurt, either. With *From the Valley to the Stars*, Assbring puts together her first true album with a cohesive theme, and the results are mixed. Mostly gone are *El Perro's* Phil Spector-y guitars and doo-wop horns—here, they're replaced by organs that complement the record's mournful mood. Despite a lack of pep, the album's still very pretty, but without any cheerful elements balancing the tone, it often feels like melancholic overload. There are many moments to love, though, particularly the effervescent "You Can't Steal a Gift" and its dirge-y follow-up, "How Did We Forget?" *Joe Colly*

Check out thousands more reviews at [XLR8R.com/reviews](http://XLR8R.com/reviews), including new releases from 3 Na Massa, Akrobatik, Ananda Project, Bisc1, Does it Offend You, Yeah?, Clara Hill, Neptune, Roommate, Saint Etienne, Shonky, Paul Woolford, and more.





Ellen Allien



Jennifer Cardini



**TWO EUROPEAN DANCEFLOOR  
QUEENS TAKE TECHNO INTO  
THE POST-MINIMAL FUTURE.**

**ELLEN ALLIEN  
BOOGY BYTES VOL. 04**  
Kompakt/GER/CD

**JENNIFER CARDINI  
FEELING STRANGE**  
Kompakt/GER/CD

As the increasingly nebulous micro-tech-house catchall "minimal" comes of age, a particular saying springs to mind. "A certain disorder in the treble range" is a phrase attributed to Factory Records producer Martin Hannett; he used it to describe a commonality between Factory bands like Joy Division, Magazine, and A Certain Ratio, who countered the bullying elitism of punk's guitar feedback with their delicate, oddly resonant clefs.

Saying that minimal directly picks up post-punk's personal-as-political tendencies is a generalization far too sweeping. But minimal certainly finds its stride in the same upper ranges, where anomalous, nervy pitch plays dramatically against melancholic tonal recesses. And you can feel the parallels in two new feature-length mixes—Ellen Allien's *Boogy Bytes Vol. 04* and Jennifer Cardini's *Feeling Strange*. Both discs fold post-hedonism anxiety into perforated body rhythms that should satisfy the bugged-out as well as the shut-ins.

Berlin-based DJ, producer, and BPitch Control label head Ellen Allien has always thrived in the edgy quarry of humanizing the hollowed-out. In Berlin's pool of talent, her expressive, expansive sets set a high-water mark for those who value the style of the DJ more than his or her selections. Allien can sometimes hit a stretch more suited to tweaking perceptions than speakers, meaning some of her musical choices resonate more in an introspective headspace than a main-room setting.

Allien came up during Germany's reunification, cutting her teeth on concrete and steel girders. Borne from these pockets, *Boogy Bytes Vol. 04* is high on life but low on air, striking an arterial beat even as certain elements oxidize. Eschewing glamour, the 15-track mix opts for a measured, viscera-streaked crowning before fully unfurling. Across the first three tracks—by AGF, Vera, and Ricardo Villalobos + Patrick Ense—transient ele-

ments fidget and decay, waning anxiously into the periphery. With Melon's "Nitzzi (In My Mind, So Fine)," the mood shifts to fade *in* and remains in a more forward mode for a good 30 minutes (highlighted by bulbous tracks from SozAdams and Richard Seeley). *Boogy Bytes Vol. 04* closes with Little Dragon's "Twice," a ballad that's a dewy counterpart to the mix's more arid feel.

Hailing from Paris, Jennifer Cardini emerged from a scene and era similarly decadent (though less severe) to Allien's, and swaddled herself in its shadows. Nothing too turgid remains from French house's dilated excess here—Cardini's aesthetic jives with Kompakt's tendency towards spacious, emotional arrangements accessorized with minor-key melodies. Less pixilated, more prowling, Cardini's *Feeling Strange* takes a complementary, but opposite tack than Allien's mix.

Cardini *opens* with a ballad—Robert Lippok's remix of Static's "Sometimes I'm Sad for a Few Seconds"—and by track four, Jos-eski's "All By Myself," galvanized pins have been placed in the mix's rhythmic backbone. Over a spongy transition, book-ended by Maurizio and Khan, Cardini goes from melody to Moroderism, touches on aloof tech-house, and hints at halos and tracers of beardo disko. Winding her way amidst the glass stalactites and rustling chrysalises of Alex Smoke, Cardini chooses macro over micro by closing with a willowy Apparat track. Over 21 tracks, Cardini is more akin to Laurent Garnier than Luciano, interested in crispness rather than long-form pliancy. *Tony Ware*



The Berlin techno goddess graced our April 2005 (#86) cover, which was designed by Steffi & Steffi, the team who also did her *Thrills* album artwork. To read the complete article, go to [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).

**BEST SEVEN SELECTIONS 2**

Best Seven/GER/CD

Daniel Best's Berlin-based Best Seven label makes coffeehouse reggae for laid-back listeners whose hearts thump at a steady 80 beats per minute. Soul, rocksteady, dub, and organic rhythms get chopped and rolled in this Rizla-sealed affair, which features previously unreleased tracks and party rockers from Boozoo Bajou, DJ Vadim, Extended Spirit, and Eva Be. But the less-familiar artists are equally intriguing, including The Black Seeds, whose "The Answer" offers richly emotional male vocals and an addictive chorus. Frost & Wagner's "Like A O" lays down dub echoes and a minimal arrangement for Paul St. Hilaire's soulful, meditative singing, a sound that typifies *Selections'* 14 tracks. Even reggae experts need to check this unique collection, where "best" is no exaggeration. *Tomas Palermo*

**NICOLA CONTE PRESENTS VIAGEM**

Far Out/UK/CD

It's hard to overstate the importance of music to Brazilian life and culture, including plenty of indigenous genres that haven't traveled to the larger world much (axé, forró, etc.). But bossa nova did make it outside—so much so that songs like "The Girl from Ipanema" are now considered Western standards. This comp, though, features lesser-known cuts (i.e., mostly stuff *not* by pioneer Antonio Carlos Jobim) that show off bossa's close kinship to American jazz. Sax legend Sonny Rollins, for example, wrote the uptempo "Samba em Blue," here performed by Sansa Trio, and Tenório Jr.'s piano work on "Nebulosa" has echoes of Oscar Peterson. Mellow, sweet, and swinging, this is bossa like a feather in the air. *Luciana Lopez*

**JEROME DERRADJI PRESENTS THE AMERICAN BOOGIE DOWN**

BBE/UK/2CD

For *The American Boogie Down*, Still Music label head Jerome Derradji has amassed a crate digger's trove of late-era disco and P-Funk-infused soul, the kind that could survive any record-burning orgy. The best cuts are clap-alongs that drift through outer-space, namely Devarme's "You Are Number One" and Visions of Tomorrow's "Galaxy," while Grayship Daviz's jerky rhythms are tailor-made for the cardboard breakdancing mat. *The American Boogie Down* has a separate, unmixed disc but the mixed version is worthier for MC Paul Randolph's calls for love on the dancefloor: "Whatever ails you baby/We've got the cure." Amen. *Cameron Macdonald*

**DEAD MAN'S HAND: POKER FLAT VOL.6**

Pokerflat/GER/2CD

From the gambling den of Steve Bug's concept lab comes this year's double-CD compilation dealt from the label's best hands. The first disc is selected by Bug himself, displaying Pokerflat's new step towards the deeper side of techno and house. Delivering a bit of disco glam with Bug and Cle's "Behind the Curtains," his live bass cuts and clever hits sooth what ails you. Sebo K remixes Martin Landsky's "Let Me Dance" into a quirky, downright thumpin' groove that only he can create. Disc Two is a mix from Cle (one half of the Martini Bros), compiling 13 future and past Pokerflat tracks into a seamless impression of late-night splendor. *Praxis*

**DON'T STOP: RECORDING TAP**

Número Group/US/CD

Número Group's latest finding is from New York's forgotten Tap label. The obscure songs range from early hip-hop ("Rub a Dub Dub"), soul ("We've Had Enough"), funk ("So Nice"), and disco ("Invisible Wind"), and are packaged with a booklet detailing the characters and stories behind the music. The tunes are lively and reflect a time when those genres all proudly coexisted. Bonnie Freeman's ballad "Does He Really Mean It" is achingly soulful, while Missy Dee & The Melody Crew's "Missy Missy Dee" is an early female rap anthem that never was. The sound quality is superb, while the liner notes document the painstaking process behind the making of the compilation. Número does it again with class and quality. *David Ma*

**LIVING BRIDGE**

Rare Book Room/US/CD

Nicolas Vernhes' Brooklyn studio has hosted many indie titans, some of which he has captured for this seamless two-disc compilation. Think of it as This Mortal Coil for our still-new millennium: From the bipolar piano by Animal Collective's Avey Tare on "I'm Your Eagle Kisser" to Telepathe's orchestral "I Can't Stand It," you'd think you were listening to *Filigræe* and *Shadow* all over again. But the star power is arguably greater here: Everyone from Silver Jews and Enon to Fischerspooner and Deerhunter show up for a session. But they have to work hard to outshine other efforts, like Blood on the Wall's short, psychedelic nugget "Lightning Song" or John Wolfington's evocative "Grace." Either way, everyone comes up a winner. *Scott Thill*

**MEMBERS OF THE TRICK**

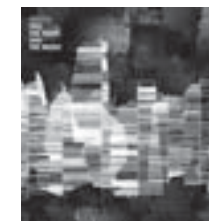
Sonar Kollektiv/GER/CD

German production and A&R duo Trickski, comprised of Berliners Yan-nick Labbé and Daniel Becker, arrived in 2005 as inaugural artists for Compost Records' Black singles series. Trading in lo-fi production aesthetics and loose, Moodymann-style beat structures, Trickski immediately attracted remix requests from Raw Fusion, Defected, and new home label Sonar Kollektiv. *Members of the Trick* compiles the pair's favorite artists with their own new oblong electronic material including "Paperbitch," a brooding electro-house number that swivels with nervous, scratchy beats. Solomun and F.B.I. deliver crisp, spacey disco grooves while Labbé's "Gallieni" slithers to the top with its cinematic '80s keyboard riffs. For those seeking quality leftfield dance music, *Members* does the trick. *Tomas Palermo*

**MOODS: YOU, THE NIGHT, AND THE MUSIC**

Backdrop/GER/CD

With the obscene amount of crappy chill-out compilations destined for cutout bins, one wonders what the Backdrop label, a new imprint of Germany's ObliqSound, can do to affect the tide. *Moods* isn't going to break new ground, but it's far from being a caricature of its bastard cousins. Craig Roseberry (a.k.a. DJ Shifty) has selected an international roster of talent that trades in a variety of feelings, styles, and interpretations of chic. Some tracks, like Frivolous' "Bloodstream," veer a tad too close to synth-pop; others, like Atjazz's bloopy remix of Grand Pianoramax's "Freestyle Figures," are delightfully unique. It's a mixed bag, but promising nonetheless. *Velanche*



**AMBIENT NOT NOT AMBIENT**

Audio Dregs/US/CD

An interesting experiment for a label often gleefully writhing around in pixels, stutter, and electro-twee, *Ambient Not Not Ambient* sees Audio Dregs assemble a motley collection of artists for a stab at genre subversion. Many of the artists here either break the form's rules—or their own rules (particularly if their game is ambient music to begin with). White Rainbow—a Portlander who specializes in New Age-y vibes—reverts to the softened glitch/IDM music he perfected years ago as [[VRRSSNN]]. E\*Vax (a.k.a. Evan Mast, one half of Ratatat) trades in his synthy downtempo ethos for some non-tempo swells of sea-blue sound. And while playing at the edges is nothing new for English techno experimentalist AM/PM, he notably provides at least one of the titular "nots," dropping in a solid, if muffled, 4/4 kick and subverting the subversion even further. *Michael Byrne*





**En Tu Casa**  
By **Nick Chacona**

HOUSEKEEPING: FROM TECH AND MINIMAL TO DEEP AND TRADITIONAL



It's been a minute since we've seen a release from the uber-prolific production outfit **Peace Division**. The U.K.-based duo of **Justin Drake** and **Clive Henry** has kept a lower profile of late, but with the release of their latest project, *Peace Division—Presents the Lab* for Tsuba Recordings, it seems they're gonna be right back on track. Their first offering as *The Lab*, devised as an outlet for deeper, sample-based experiments within house music, is a five-track EP for the London label. Considering that the pair was remixed by **Mood II Swing's John Ciafone** last year, there is no doubt an influential connection between the camps, but PD keeps it thoroughly modern with their stark, stripped-down arrangements and layering.

Enclave Recordings is back with its second EP, this time from the Belgian production duo **Telepaticos** (a.k.a. **Marco Salon**; remember **Outlander** on R&S?) and **Sandro Valcke**. The pair keeps it way deep and smooth on the *Carpe Sativa* EP: four cuts of jazz-funk house, perfect for a drive by a lake, a cocktail on the shore, or the early side of a grooving set. Keep any eye out for the boys' next release on **Scott Ferguson's** Ferris Park label later this year.

Ann Arbor's Spectral Sound has a pointedly Chi-town flavor for the next few releases and that's not a bad thing at all. Label mainstay **Tadd Mullinix** dons his **James T. Cotton** guise again to keep the acid alive and kicking on his second long-player under that moniker, *Like No One*. As part of a new wave of producers exploring the Jakbeat sound, Cotton provides a reinterpretation of classic house and techno rhythms—à la Phuture and early Trax records—while steering clear of retro cheekiness. Tadd teams up with frequent collaborators **Traxx** and **D'Marc Cantu** (his partner in **2AM/FM**) on a couple of cuts as well. Also for the label, **Todd Osborn** returns with the *Ruling* EP, a fresh four-tracker that explores the more melodic Larry Heard school of Chicago sounds.

Speaking of the Windy City, on a recent trip there, I was introduced to **Benga** and **Coki's** massive dubstep tune, "Night." (What rock have I been under?) But what wasn't so obvious to most is the absolute corker of a house mix by **Geeneus** that's found after the drum & bass reworks on the CD single. Working the main bleeping element over an uptempo tribal groove, Geeneus creates what could be the dub-house tune of the year. I wouldn't be shocked to see Defected license this as they do every other sure-fire banger.

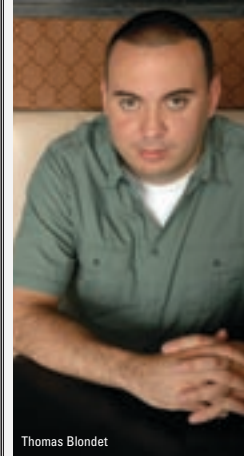
In tech-house territory, **Stuart Geddes**, the force behind the Mulletover parties, launches his Murmur label with the inaugural release from his project, **Rekleiner**. "Some People" is a drifting, spacious blast into the afterhours mindset. Coupled with an energetic rework by Moon Harbour's **Daniel Stefanik** that rolls along on a nice hi-hat workout and melting flange effects, this is a must-have for fans of Ripperton, Steve Bug, Damian Lazarus, et al.

Back to the house megalith, **Simon Dunmore's** Defected label has gone for the gusto in licensing what could be the biggest slice of commercialism yet with **Funkerman's** "Speed Up." This bit of radio fodder will definitely serve to raise the Defected coffers to new levels, no doubt blowing up the mainstream airwaves and whatever that British dance video station is called.



**Broken Business**  
By **Peter Nicholson**

FUTURE JAZZ AND BUSTED BEATS



What's new wit you? New to me is Sweden's **Kissey Asplund** and her *Fuss'n'Fight* EP for the also new-to-me R2 Records. Gotta love it when I get something I know absolutely nothing about and end up digging it hard. Such is the case with the title track, which matches up Asplund's seriously sexy voice with a sliding, off-kilter hip-hop beat. Apparently, production is handled by **Papa Jazz**, and they know what they're doing with some sinuous sax and turntable scribbles layered under my other fave track, "Hit Me With Medication."

While we're up north, I want to give a shout out to the latest in the Kindred Spirits *Free Spirits* series of reissues. This one, *Soul of Africa* by **Hal Singer** and **Jef Gilson**, includes two cuts from the equally hard-to-find **Jef Miller Septet Avec Lloyd Miller**. Recorded in 1965, when the Texas sax man Hal Singer hooked up with Parisian Jef Gilson, this EP is a rambling slice of freewheeling jazz on the Afro-centric tip. I'm especially enjoying the oddball humming and Farfisa on "Le Grand Bidou."

Okay, back to the broken. Mukatsuku Records always represents and they have a pair of new ones you must check. *Guynamite EP 01* from (surprise!) **Guynamite** is first on the decks. "Those Eyes" is a tight combination of crisply busted beats and Selina Campbell's sweetly lilting voice, while the other cuts are very much a classy, laid-back affair. Mukatsuku also comes correct with the neck-cracking jazz-hop vibes on *The Funky Instrumentals 45* from **Gagle**. It may only be two-and-a-half minutes long, but "Kuro Fessional MC" packs a serious punch with rough breakbeats and sharp horns.

**Unity** is a new outfit from two members of the jazz band **Sugar Beats**, and they've got the *Blanks* EP out now on Record Kicks. "Squirrel's Quarrel" shows off some deft drum programming, while the title track has a massive, squiggly bassline and features the always super-soulful singing of **Ernesto**. None other than **Colonel Red** turns up on "Possible," which drops another big b-line beneath Red's tight tenor. Fresh beats and two of the best singers in the biz—what's not to love?

Cookshop Records is a solid outfit that proves Tru Thoughts isn't the only game in Brighton, and once again they deliver the goods with the latest in their series of compilation EPs, *Taster 4*. Fans of DJ Food and their ilk will definitely dig **Jonathan Krisp's** "The Horror," which mashes up rockabilly, soundtrack strings, and a few choice screams into a light-hearted, fleet-footed shaker.

Gonna close things out this month on a dubbed-out vibe with **Thomas Blondet's** *Echo Chamber* EP on Washington, DC's excellent Rhythm & Culture Records. A bit of everything on this one, from crisp house to sunny *tropicalia electronica*, but I keep coming back to "Echo Chamber" itself. With a big, bouncing beat, a rolling chat from **Zeebo** on the mic, and an expert blend of the digital and the acoustic, this cut packs a serious punch that belies its easy groove. It's the "steel fist inna velvet glove" single of the month!

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REVIEWS COLUMNS



## After Silence By Martin De Leon

THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



Strategy



Little Women

This month we've got a new John Zorn space, some fresh 7" records, and couple of finds I hope ya'll dig.

Indian producer **Kid Kishore**, who reps Copenhagen, Denmark, gets spastic in the springtime with his release on the The Social Registry, continuing their terrific 7" series. "Klap Perker (Lady Smita Version)" uses dirty Danish ghattotech (called Perker tech), which employs lightning-fast beats. But the gem is "Nahi Babba Star Speed Grime" which sounds like a '90s rave in Delhi on some great LSD.

Not so much known for its dance parties, John Zorn's new (tiny) performance space in New York, **The Stone** (thestonenyc.com), is a place folks gotta know about. At a recent, seated **Matmos** show there, even the band's **Drew Daniel** had to give it up for the post-Tonic venue. A great place to hear schizo laptop jazz or a short lecture on how brainwaves make electronic music. Next time you visit the Rotten Apple, come by and support.

Or, go out to the West Coast and catch Portland producer **Strategy** (a.k.a. **Paul Dickow**), who programs airy, Casino vs. Japan-esque gems on his new EP, *Music for Lamping* (Audio Dregs). The 14-minute opening track, "I Can't Stand the Rain," spells it out: syrupy ambience in a post-Eno world.

Los Angeles band **Health** is another reason to throw up the "W." Scruffy rock is their steez on this 7" single, "Perfect Skin" (Suicide Squeeze), which should please fans of sludgy, Bardo Pond stoner rock. The **Curses!** (a.k.a. **Drop the Lime**) remix packs in the brainy disco for those granola Angelinos to dance to. (Hey, dancing hippies are why I got into this business.)

Picking up where they left off, The Fader label just put out another limited-edition split 7" between **White Williams** ("Blue Steel Fakemaster") and Brooklyn rock savants **Dirty Projectors** ("Police Story"). The cartoon cover is by the brilliant **Matt Furie**, who, like **Lightning Bolt's** Brian Chippendale (see his books *Maggots* and *Ninja*), draws amazing offbeat comics. Steal a copy of this, please.

Nerdy singer-songwriter **Laura Barrett** wrote one of my favorite songs so far of this year:

"Robot Ponies." The Toronto native also wails on the African thumb piano on her debut EP, *Earth Sciences* (Paper Bag). Robot ponies—can it get any better?

Yes, it can. **Little Women** (a quartet of guys, naturally) uses math rock, punk, and free jazz to make heart attack-inducing noise on its EP, *Teeth* (Sockets). Two saxophonists, a drummer, and an electric guitarist rip through four songs (each titled "teeth") in the tradition of Peter Brotzmann, Sonic Youth, and Tortoise.

In other newsy stuff, look for Houston's **Indian Jewelry's** newest suite of sludgy psych rock, *We are Free* (Monitor), hot on the tails of *We Are the Wild Beast*. **All in the Golden Afternoon**, from Austin, is a pretty duo that puts Beach House to shame with their dreamy shoegaze folk on their self-titled debut EP on Mind Expansion Records. Israeli band **Monotonix** released their Drag City debut EP, *Body Language*, which consists of four songs of thrashy gold. And also, check out the British label Blank Tapes for bands like **Spring Tide** and dubstep whiz **Bass Clef**. Solid stuff.



## Bass Guest Reviews: Meat Beat Manifesto

To understand Meat Beat Manifesto is to understand the progression of modern dance music—particularly if back issues of *XLR8R* are your gauge. Main man Jack Dangers has pushed electronic music in the U.S. in all possible directions, exploring the deconstructive techniques of hip-hop and dub and applying them to techno, D&B, and nearly everything else imaginable. He and his collaborators have also generated some of dance music's most classic recordings, releasing early stunners like *99%* and *Armed Audio Warfare* (which were commonly mislabeled as "industrial") on Mute and Wax Trax!. After two decades, Dangers continues to stretch the barriers of sound experimentation, and on *Autoimmune* (Metropolis), MBM's 10th release, he comes armed with an ear for dubstep, which weighs heavily on his tightly knit synthesis of beats, bass, and distortion. We checked in with the longtime *XLR8R* fave to see what's been turning his crank lately. *Taryn Harrington*

meatbeatmanifesto.com

**VARIOUS PRODUCTION**  
"PUFF RIDER (FEAT. DAVE CLOUD)"

Fire/UK/12

When the '80s collide with 2008 via 1968, you get a track reminiscent of Don Van Vliet (a.k.a. Captain Beefheart). Suppose a sampler fell through a hole in the sky and hit him on the head. This might be the result—which wouldn't be a bad thing. Crazy, man. *Jack Dangers*

**KODE9 & THE SPACEAPE**  
"KONFUSION"

white/UK/dub plate

I'm Konfused... I see, in super-slow-motion, the scene from *The Shining* when the elevator opens and all the blood comes out, knocking things out its way and enveloping everything in its viscous environs—and I like it. *Jack Dangers*

**SCORN**  
"SNAG"

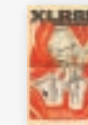
Ohm Resistance/US/12

Don't play this if you live on the Hayward fault. Take down your auntie's favorite antique ornaments and throw on a fresh pair of Depends, because 7 Hz (hurts) when Mick Harris discharges one of his phenomenal crushing basslines. *Jack Dangers*

**ITAL TEK**  
"INSOMNIAC"

Planet Mu/UK/12

Ahhhhh. It sounds like a creepy cimbalom. Nay, I say a twisted mandolin. Imagine Gepetto from Pinocchio dancing on a sea of splintered glass. I love it. Does that make sense? *Jack Dangers*



Meat Beat Manifesto was first featured in issue #2 in a piece entitled "The Manifesto That Meats Its Beats."

PROLYPHIC & REANIMATOR  
THE UGLY TRUTH

"INTELLIGENT HIP-HOP RARELY BANGS LIKE THIS... REANIMATOR'S BEATS HIT HARD WHILE PROLYPHIC HITS THE HEART." -URB

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## Read the Label By Jesse "Orosco" Serwer

HIP-HOP MIXTAPES, WHITE LABELS, AND SHIT



Prodigy



AZ

Before he began serving a three-year prison sentence in February, **Prodigy** made sure he left behind enough material to remember him by. Not only did the **Mobb Deep** MC put new technology to work by dropping his new *H.N.I.C. Part 2* (Infamous/Voxonic Music) in a planned 1400 languages, but he's also reportedly filmed a video for each of its 13 tracks. Like the teaser street single "The ABCs" before it, "The Life" is not exactly a radio killer. With its gothic, **Alchemist**-produced beat work and P's grizzle-voiced threats ("We not cut from the same cloth/You chinchilla soft/I'm Brillo pad coarse/Take your skin off") it's as un-commercial as it gets. For more ugly heat from the H.N.I.C., check the *P Against the World* mixtape at a bootlegger (or URL) near you.

Another '90s-era New York MC stalwart who's sounding rejuvenated lately is Brooklyn's **AZ**. The a-side to Anthony Cruz's "Life on the Line" brings feel-good flavor and a sweet-ass falsetto hook from **Street Radio** producer **Jimi Kendrix** but the real juice is on the b-side, "The Hardest." Diehard D-Block fans might remember this **Large Professor**-produced joint from **Styles P**'s legal bootleg, *The Ghost Sessions*, but the combination of Styles and AZ's chemistry, plus Large Pro's seriously heated track (his strongest in recent memory), is worth revisiting a second time.

A hodgepodge of new joints (Prodigy, **Cassidy**), rare freestyles (**Ghostface** and **Raekwon**, **Sheek Louch**), and an even rarer **Notorious BIG** Pepsi commercial, the new self-titled disc from New York streetwear shop Boundless NY (boundlessny.com), mixed by **DJ Teddy King**, is not something I'd normally cover. The disc also happens to feature a 45-minute mix of unreleased **Nas** joints (if you don't love obscure Nas joints from the mid '90s, you don't like hip-hop) and the return of Boundless' **Tes Uno** (the **A2**-produced track is called "The Comeback Kid"), who you might recall from his work with Lex Records several years back.

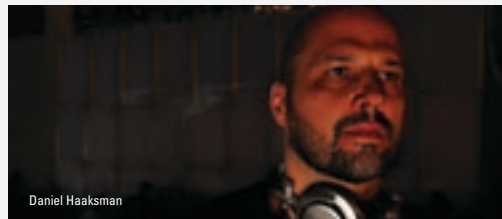
While we're on the streetwear tip... Seriously, dudes, just 'cause you rock a good thread game doesn't mean you can rap, or that anyone wants to hear more than a line here and there about your clothes. I know stuff like Cool Kids and Mickey Factz is all the rage right now, but, like MC Lyte and Positive K, I'm not having it. I'm glad to say I had up-and-coming Cleveland native **Kid Cudi** pegged wrong. While Cudi might be the latest artist to drop on hipster-rap nexus Fool's Gold, his "Day 'N Nite" is far from a dud about duds, revealing an MC with introspective depth and a catchy sing-song flow. While the single's "This is Why I'm Hot" clone of a beat is lukewarm, and the b-side ("Dat New New") is disappointing overall, the Brooklyn-based rapper's *Man on the Moon* LP looks promising.

Sorta like the hip-hop equivalents of baloney-obsessed comedian Michael Showalter, **Yea Big** and **Kid Static** are some rappers with a seriously unhealthy sandwich obsession. Or so their "Eatchoy Samwich" (FMSPRC) would have you believe. Delivered on a one-track mini-CD (don't get too many of those), "Eatchoy" is a lyrical delicatessen, stacked high with references to BLTs and tuna melts, and other assorted bread-and-meat-related double entendres. If it didn't sound so stupid on paper, it wouldn't be so funny on wax.



## Basic Needs By Kid Kameleon

LOW-END NECESSITIES, FROM RAGGA TO DUBSTEP AND BEYOND



Daniel Haaksman



DJ Cutlass Supreme



Daniel Perlin (photo by Gaia Cambiaggi)

There's a healthy helping of ridiculously fun and genre-defying tracks out right now from Berlin's Man Recordings. Label boss **Daniel Haaksman** really does have unbelievable quality control, and you don't want to miss any of his new and upcoming releases (including his podcast currently up at XLR8R.com). There's the slinky **Ku Bu** collaboration between Austrian producer **Stereotyp** and Viennese-Brazilian **MC Joice Muniz** ("Rebola" b/w "Um Korpo"). It's deceptively straightforward but reveals delightful musical complexities upon repeated listening. A second single is in the works for the pair. Also on Man, the "Banda" b/w "Me Chinga 7" is a high-energy rock/*baile* crossover for producer **Diplo** and fierce-as-a-tiger **MC Deize Tigrona**. Then there's the collab between the label's number-one producer, **Edu K**, with **Marina Valle** (who recently split from **Bonde Do Role**) called "(Edu K) Me Bota Pra Dançar." It's like a *baile* jack track, sure to turn heads with its sexy chatter. But my favorite current release has to be the *Baile Funk Masters Vol. 4* by the awesome **DJ Amazing Clay** of Rio. DJing for over a quarter-century (!), Clay chops up everything from the *Indiana Jones* theme to awesome original vocals, and the whole thing will make the club jump. It takes a lot to impress me in the *baile* funk genre, but Haaksman makes sure every cut is quality. More info at manrecordings.com.

Definitely also check out the latest compilation from WIDE Records. This is a net-only label that represents U.K. bass music in the electro and breaks vein, but the sound is actually remarkably diverse, running over everything from dubstep to ghettech on its bumpy ride. The compilation is simply called *WIDE Records Presents...* and features strong tracks from **DJ Cutlass Supreme**, **Debasser**, **Vadz**, **Jkamata**, **Kansas City Prophets**, and **Paul Blackford**, as well as a half-dozen more. Top-quality stuff, it's also a teaser for no less than seven EPs on the way. Find 'em at myspace.com/widerecords.

**Secret Agent Gel** and **Sharmaji** have finally gotten their label, Low Motion Recordings, off the ground. The first 12" is the unique "Body," which features Gel's awesome bubbling basslines paired up with the raunchiest sex talk imaginable from **Warrior Queen**. The b-side rounds it out nicely on a slightly more brooding tip, and if that weren't enough, Gel has also launched the Bass Tourist digital label, with one singular concept in mind: "Big basslines!" Look out for this New Yorker's take on the U.K. bassline phenomenon, and stay tuned for Sharmaji's follow-up 12 inch on Low Motion at lowmotionrecords.com.

On a slightly more introspective vibe, I was happy to hear some creative sounds out of Thrill Jockey label in the form of **Nemeth** (a.k.a. Stefan Nemeth) of **Radian**. *Film* is full of soundtracks that resonate with deep sonics and marry live instrumentation with Wasteland-like glitch. A sobering, absorbing musical tale.

Lastly, **Daniel Perlin** (a.k.a. **DJ N-Ron**) finally grew tired of searching for a label for his mix CD of entirely original material, and decided to host it himself. Dpblog.danielperlin.net is where you'll find this bassy "Mix CD of the Year" contender.

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REVIEWS COLUMNS



### Bubble Metropolis By ML Tronik

TECHNO: MINIMAL, BANGING, AND BEYOND.



Khan



Luke Abbott



King Roc

Sure I've said it before, but I can't help but notice that techno is becoming increasingly more organic in instrumentation every day. Not only have things gotten more organic, but a fair amount of tracks are straight-up tribal in nature. Take **Wareika's** *Men Village* EP (Connaissance Supérieur), for instance. Like techno takin' it back to the motherland! Dark, deep, brooding, and primal, yet its structure and arrangement are very much in the techno vein. The sprawling 14-minute original is backed by a remix by **Reboot** that is similarly expansive.

Be on the hunt for "Rezolution" by **Pascal FEOS** and **Marc Miroir** (Level Non Zero). This one is dancefloor-friendly and gets into a snug percussive groove. The **Chris Wood** mix relies heavily on the original but builds itself up into a measured frenzy.

Now it's back to the cold streets of Berlin, where techno god **Khan** has returned from the 1990s. And this time he wants everyone to know he's single. *Who Never Rests Remixed Vol. 1* (I'm Single) is a remix sampler of tracks taken from his recent full-length, *Who Never Rests*. This is definitely more on the weird kick-back-and-listen tip, but I'm a sucker for verse/chorus/verse on top of techno, so I suggest you give this one a try, especially "On the Run," as remixed by **Kaos & Me**.

Also flying a freak flag is **Mr. Statik's** *Temperamento* EP (Karloff). Tracky techno pumps while ghostly humming provides a haunting sonic backdrop on the opening track, "Teletourgiko." There's an obligatory deep-voice track (damn you, Marc Houle!) that's okay, but the b-side tracks ("Bull in a China House" and "West Coast Booty") are the standouts. Recommended if you like sparse, minimal techno with bizarre vocal snippets.

Keep your eyes and ears locked for "Screw the Coffeemaker," the second single off of **Michal Ho's** album of the same name. The a-side provides a pleasant surprise in the form of an **Adam Beyer** remix. Trust me, it's much more bouncy and fun than you've ever heard him get. The b-side remix by **Inxec** shines most though—definitely a peak

time killer!

The illustrious Soma Records label comes with two top-notch releases this month. First, **Xpansul & Massi DL's** *Nerd Life* EP offers syncopated, bleepy jack tracks and a frenetic, stabby synth attack. The shimmering hi-hat funk of "Nerd Soul" is the one you should rock in the club. Meanwhile, **Blackstrobe's** *Ivan Smagghe* re-emerges to remix **Let's Go Outside's** "I'll Lick Your Spine." Also on remix duties for this dingy techno ditty is **Repeat Repeat**. Guys in skinny jeans and girls who tuck their pants into their boots will love this.

Shifting gears into the more dulcet side of this techno thing is **Luke Abbott**. Any Luke is good in my book, and this one deserves some props for his *Tuesday* EP (Border Community), an inspired six-track effort. Of course, Border Community's trademark ethereal element shines, too, but Abbott even gets a little rugged with some 8-bit beatdowns, as well. It also helps that no track is longer than five minutes; before you can get bored with the tricks he uses the song is over. I like that.

Back onto the dancefloor it's **Brian Paddick** (a.k.a. **King Roc**) with the "Liquid (Say Yes to No!)" 12. The opening track fuses a disco beat, trance-y synth stabs and acidic flourishes to make a very tough and clearly well thought-out piece for the club. Think a less minimal **Stephan Bodzin** and you're getting warm. Track two, a remix of "Tirades of E.N.V.," shuffles along with a plucky synth to make for a serious head-nodder. This one will grow on ya if you're not careful!



### Techno Guest Reviews: Attias

Brothers Alex and Stephane Attias have been fixtures on the Swiss club scene since they started DJing in the late '80s and making minimal-house records with a progressive pulse in the mid-'90s. Over the years, they've dropped gems on Chicago's Still Music and their own Visions Inc. and Freedom Soundz imprints, incorporating everything from jazz, soul, and disco into their finely crafted techno and house endeavors. In 2006, they unveiled their long overdue joint project, Attias. A host of singles in 2007, including "Analysis" (on Carl Craig's Planet E label), garnered the duo new acclaim and respect. Those anxiously awaiting their upcoming slabs for Rush Hour and Mule Musiq will do well to check out a few of Alex's recent favorites below. *Zoneil Maharaj*

freedomsoundz.com, myspace.com/attiasworld

#### RHADOO

##### DOR MIT ORU

Cadenza/GER/2x12  
Bucharest, Romania DJ and producer Rhadoo delivers a boombastic techno/minimal/experimental/house/electronic/supersonic EP here! Cadenza boss Luciano gave him this opportunity not only because of his immense production talent but also because he's an amazing DJ. Minimal beats, sub-bass, and subtle, twisted electronic sounds are the essence of his tunes, strictly made for the dancefloor. You've been warned! *Alex Attias*

#### HERVÉ AK

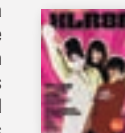
##### "SORRY BUT NO (RIPPERTON'S D3 REMIX)"

Octopus/IRE/download  
French techno artist Hervé AK's "Sorry But No" gets the rework treatment from Lausanne's Ripperton in a nice and melodic fashion. Fresh, fat, deep beats, live electronics, fat Moog bassline, and driving percussion make this remix a dancefloor monster! Ripp's productions and remixes are only getting better, and are always worth checking out. Some sweet Swiss precision! *Alex Attias*

#### SEBBO

##### "WATAMU BEACH (ORIGINAL AND MORITZ VON OSWALD REWORK)"

Desolat/GER/12  
After releasing successful records like "Beirut Boogie" and "Chunky Fudge," Sebbo, a techno and deep-house producer and DJ, delivers some pure, dirty old-school-meets-new-school techno. A pure dancefloor track that sounds like it was recorded on a tape machine: fat and dirty groovy tech! The flipside is remarkable. Basic Channel's Moritz von Oswald takes it to another dimension where dub meets techno. The sound is amazing and we can assure you that this is some essential vinyl! Don't sleep! *Alex Attias*



Alex Attias first did guest reviews in September 2004 (#80). He reviewed 12s from the likes of Sleepwalker, The Free Radikalz, and IZZI DUNN for the Future Jazz section.

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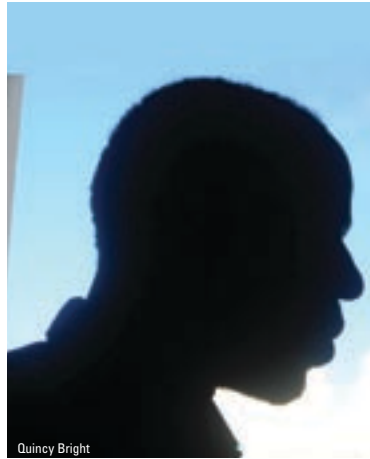


## Downbeat Diaspora By Rico "Superbizzee" Washington

GETTING YOU UP ON THE LATEST IN R&B,  
FUNK, AND SOUL



Jamie Lidell



Quincy Bright



Kissey Asplund

Gloryfunkinhallelujah, y'all! 2008 is all about being out with the old and in with the new, yet the primaries still seem to have the country polarized. So in lieu of being led astray, I move that we take the liberty of electing our own funky president! Without further adieu, I present to you the 2008 Downbeat Diaspora presidential candidates!

Campaigning on the throwback platform is Brooklyn's funkier and finest, Truth & Soul Records! They've been blazing trails with their latest collection of soul singles and rarities, *Fallin' Off the Reel 2*, which features a **Quincy Bright** stunner.

Running on a joint extraterrestrial ticket, **Gnarls Barkley** has just put in their bid for the second time around, and they don't seem to be losing much ground in the race! If you haven't had a seizure from watching the video for their new single, "Run," then you probably won't mind checkin' their second LP, *The Odd Couple* (Downtown/Atlantic).

This just in... A few non-U.S. citizens have brazenly crossed the Atlantic to make a bid for the presidency. U.K.'s Strut Records celebrates the contributions of Island Records founder **Chris Blackwell's** legendary studio, with well-known and obscure mixes of cuts by the likes of **Grace Jones**, **Tom Tom Club**, **Gwen Guthrie**, and **Talking Heads** on *Funky Nassau: The Compass Point Story 1980-1986*.

The spirit of yesteryear's candidates, Terrence Trent D'Arby and Jamiroquai seemed to have converged in blue-eyed soul candidate, **Jamie Lidell**, and his sophomore album, *Jim* (Warp). If his debut effort is any indication, he'll be stiff competition in the popularity polls for his eccentric counterpart **James Pants** and his debut, *Welcome* (Stones Throw)... even though the **Peanut Butter Wolf** remix of James' single "Ka\$h" is dope as hell.

Other candidates may have some difficulty addressing the convention floor with the howling from Analog Africa Records and their blazin' *African Scream Contest* compilation, packed with 14 hollerin' cuts from Togo and Benin. Note: Turn your amps down before you bump **El Rego Et Ses Commandos**' "Se Na Min."

Old trusty BBE Records also throws its hat in the ring, running on the crate-diggers ticket, with two full-lengths: *Jerome Derradji Presents: The American Boogie Down* and **Kissey Asplund's** *Plethora*. Derradji plucks 12 rare disco cuts from oblivion, like the **Greysheep Daviz** jawn "Get Up Get Down and Let Your Body Pop," melding them into a funky continuum, while off-kilter Swedish jazzy belle Asplund teams up with French hip-hop production outfit **Papa Jazz** for a quirky good time!

**Curumin** jumps back into the race with his sophomore record, *JapanPopShow* (Quannum Projects). An impressive blend of Brazilian vibes, funk, and hip-hop, this one should bode well with the masses. For those who saw him preaching to the masses at this year's SXSW, you well know the score.

In recent news, urban mystic **Madlib** severs his political ties to **YNO** to partner up with veteran Brazilian funkier and **Azymuth** drummer **Mamão**, forming the alliance **Jackson Conti**. With the spacey, tropical vibes that permeate the 18 cuts on *Sujinho* (Kindred Spirits), this consolidation of powers is a force to be reckoned with.

Now that you've been briefed on the candidates, here's a short public service announcement: Get on out to the polls and vote! Ask not what the funk can do for you; ask what you can do for the funk!



## Make Space By Ross Holland

LEFTFIELD DANCE, DISCO, POST-PUNK, AND  
EARTHLY WEIRDNESS



Pilooski



Son of Sound



The Diaphonoids

Last fall, DFA engineer **Eric Broucek** (a.k.a. **Babytalk**) made quite the debut as a solo producer with "Keep on Move," a fantastic electro-disco affair. Well, his second 12" isn't much different. "Chance" is a dubby, layered burner and if it doesn't satisfy your space-disco needs, then I'm sure the **Hercules and Love Affair** remix on the flip will. Look for a release on Eric's own Stickydisc Recordings.

In other DFA-related news, **Still Going** find themselves at the remix helm on a pair of monster 12s from recent Eskimo signees **Low Motion Disco**. They're among good company too—**LSB**, **Aeroplane**, and **Soft Rocks** all get a turn reworking LMD's "Love Love Love" and there isn't a sleeper in the bunch. Tiësto and crew might benefit from a quick listen to the Still Going cut—it seems tension doesn't have to be followed by release after all.

Over in the Bay Area, the **40 Thieves** gang has prepped another superb release with the *Don't Turn It Off EP* (Permanent Vacation). The title track, a Hot Chocolate cover, finds Qzen's sultry vocals floating over some fine slap-bass boogie, but the highlight of the EP has to be "Theme From Nutriдер." Don't let the tongue-in-cheek title deter you; this is dark, twisted disco at its best.

**Runaway's** disco edits got me hooked, but now that they're dropping original material, I'm starting to think that these dudes are pretty damn flawless. "Brooklyn Club Jam," the Brooklyn duo's upcoming 12" on **Matt Edwards'** Rekids label, is a driving, hypnotic nod to Rhythm Is Rhythim's "Strings of Life," and, well, it's pretty damn flawless, too.

Consistency isn't a problem for Paris' **Pilooski** either. His latest Dirty Edits EP takes on tracks by The Pointer Sisters, Danny Gold, and, most triumphantly, Del Shannon. Pilooski's Franki Valli edit of "Beggin'" may have proved that lighthearted '60s pop can churn with the best of 'em, but when Del Shannon goes four-to-the-floor it's a whole different ballgame.

It's no surprise (or news) that "nu disco" has had a genre-wide obsession with dated sci-fi and horror-film imagery, especially when it's of the Italian persuasion. Does it go too far? Not when the tracks sound as stellar as they do on **The Diaphonoids'** *Mermaids of Lunaris* EP. With kitschy washes and funky Italo synth lines, tracks like "What the Fuck Do You Want With Us Earthlings" may be inspired by '70s *giallos*, but they sound just fine on a dancefloor to me. Look for an upcoming 12" release on London's Bear Funk.

While you're at it, keep an ear out for upcoming releases from fellow London label Tirk. In particular, don't miss the debut from **Architeq** (a.k.a. Sam Annand). The *Birds of Prey* EP is a huge breath of fresh air, taking dubby space melodies and giving them a punch of glitch.

Lastly, back in the Big Apple, expect huge tracks from **Son of Sound** and **Drityhaze**. Both Son of Sound's *Trial By Fire* EP (Speak) and Drityhaze's remix of **Andrew Allsgood's** "Raise It Down" (Truffle) feature some tight, moody production and jaw-dropping drum work. Keep it coming, keep it coming.



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**Lucky 13**  
By Toph One

TophOne spins weekly at the RedWine Social, White Label, Saints & Sinners, and Funkside in San Francisco



Tal Klein



A shot from Hamburger Eyes' Inside Burgerworld by David Uzardt

Once again, TeamWino will ride 550 miles this June from S.F. to L.A. with AIDS-LifeCycle 7, to raise money and awareness in the fight against AIDS and HIV. 2,500 riders this year, but our crew rolls small and tight—just me, Spider from Cyclecide, Timeteo Gigante, and a newbie, Norm Ferrar. We'll watch *Mash* (a must-see documentary about the S.F. fixie scene) and some footage from last year's Tour of California for inspiration, pack some cut-offs and t-shirts, and hit the road for seven incredible days along the high-ways and back roads—camping along the way and seeing this great state like few others ever get the chance. Quite a journey, and we'll have quite the soundtrack to fill our heads and weary bodies.

**1. MOCHIPET MICROPHONEPET**  
Daly City/US/CD, 12

Our lil' purple dinosaur brings all sorts of electro-funk ruckus on his latest, but the ones to rock are "Get Your Whistle Wet (feat. The Hustle Heads)" and "PJs (featuring RQM of Al Haca Soundsystem)" for the real extra heavyweight bizness.

**2. PEYOTE CODY POW WOW: LIVE FROM UPINYA**  
Mix/US/CD

I met my man while driving around Hollywood with FatHed in an ice-cream truck on a hung-over Sunday afternoon, selling popsicles out front of the Do-Over and sipping on a flask of brandy. Then he passed me his CD and I realized just the mind I was up against. Possibly the illest meeting of heavy metal and hip-hop yet laid down (Judas Priest vs. Wu-Tang; Iron Maiden vs. James Brown vs. Rakim), and the man gets it right!

**3. TAL KLEIN "EMMYLOU'S UNDERWATER PETTING ZOO"**  
Aniligital/US/12

Hot, super-funky mixes from Cubase Dan and Neighbour (more on Neighbour to follow), and also be on the lookout for Tal's "Plastic Starfish" full-length due out, too. Jazzy, breaky good times for the dancefloor.

**4. NEON NEON "RAQUEL"**  
Lex/UK/12

Freaky electro from Boom Bip with Gruff Rhys on vocals. Check "I Told Her on Alderaan" off the CD, too—I swear to God it sounds like Peter Gabriel meets The Cars.

**5. NEIGHBOUR STREET MEAT EP**  
Homebreakin/CAN/12EP

Mid-tempo boogie action from a DJ brother up in Calgary. Perfect for the RedWine Social or any dirty little bar jams.

**6. SEE-I "THE KING"**  
Bastard Jazz/US/10

Straight reggae flavor on the original, but things get funky up courtesy of the Magic Fly remix on the flip. Nice vibes.

**7. MILEZ BENJIMAN "CHOP THAT WOOD"**  
Tru Thoughts/UK/12

Heaviness from this Dutch trio: the party vocals of old P-Funk, but matched with the grimy production of Dizzee Rascal. This one'll tear holes in the floor!

**8. V/A BLACK LOCUST 2**  
Black Locust/US/12EP

Reggae/R&B blends from deep Brooklyn. Try the Justin Timberlake vs. Tony Matterhorn or T-Pain vs. Akon tracks. Hotness for the clubs.

**9. COPPA "SOCIETY HOS"**  
Dis-Joint/US/12

Drums aplenty on this cosmic disco builder from Cool Chris (Groove Merchant) and Bing Ji Ling. Works well in any kind of set, and is a perfect bridge when mixing genres. Funk it up!

**10. BRENK "DON'T STOP"**  
Melting Pot/GER/7

Cool, mellow beats that sound like they came from J Dilla himself. Also peep Suff Daddy's "Kill Bill" and Kova & Miles' "Clap Clap" for further funkiness on this fine label.

**11. GAGLE "EASTERN VOYAGE"**  
Mukatsuku/UK/7

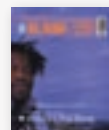
Nik Weston's vinyl-only label comes correct with Japanese jazzy/hip-hop-pers Gagle, featuring the talents of producer DJ Mitsu the Beats. Side-a is a piano-and-horn-driven foot-stomper that could be an undiscovered classic from a sweaty London acid-jazz club circa '89. "Kuro Fessional MC" is a chase scene with drums that would make Spinna or Lil Louis proud.

**12. DJ QUEST QUESTOLOUS**  
ZQ/US/CD

The one and only DJ Quest (Space Travelers/Live Human) takes us on another voyage deep into his twisted world, alongside friends Luke Sick, T-Rock, Oaty Love, Eddie K, and more on production and vocals. A little dark, a little weird, but always amazing skills and sounds from this extended Gulp City familia.

**LUCKY 13. HAMBURGER EYES INSIDE BURGERWORLD**  
powerHouse Books/US/book

Since its first b+w Xeroxed zine in '02, the Hamburger Eyes collective has grown to almost 20 members focusing on documentary photography from the likes of Ted Pushinsky, Boogie, founders Ray and David Potes, and fellow travelers with an eye for the odd and sublime in everyday life.



Toph One's Lucky 13 first ran eight years ago in issue #41. The first Lucky 13 entry was MC Paul Barman's *It's Very Stimulating*.

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## IN THE STUDIO: 9TH WONDER

THE FORMER LITTLE BROTHER BEATSMITH BRANCHES OUT, BUT THE FORMULA AIN'T CHANGED.

WORDS: JESSE SERWER

9th Wonder put the soul back in Southern fried hip-hop a half-decade back with his warm, sample-driven beats on Little Brother's debut LP, *The Listening*. Quickly landing freelance production work with Jay-Z, Destiny's Child, and Mary J. Blige, among others, the Winston-Salem, NC native was soon recognized as one of the saviors of sample-based hip-hop, alongside Just Blaze and Kanye West. While 9th left Little Brother behind in 2006, he hasn't changed his tune sonically, as evidenced by last year's *The Dream Merchant, Vol. 2* (6Hole). 2008 is shaping up to be his most prolific year yet. With *9 Wonders* (a recently released online EP with NY rapper NYOIL) in the bag, 9th will drop *The Formula* (Duck Down), his second full-length collaboration with Black Moon's Buckshot; *Big Brother*, a digital EP with Jay Electronica; and his third solo LP, *The Wonder Years* (Asylum), in the coming months.

**XLR8R: YOUR NEW ALBUM WITH BUCKSHOT IS CALLED *THE FORMULA*. DO YOU HAVE A FORMULA YOU WORK FROM IN THE STUDIO?**

9th Wonder: The formula is the whole idea of him coming to North Carolina and working. He flies down, gets a hotel, and I pick him up the same time everyday. That sets the mind frame for when we go into the studio together. He'll be working on and writing to a beat I already made, and I'll be making new ones. We'll record the one he wrote to and then I'll burn beats I made that day. He'll take them home, and by the time he comes back the next day, he's written to them. That's our formula, for the most part.

**YOU'VE BEEN PROLIFIC LATELY. ARE YOU DOING ANYTHING EQUIPMENT-WISE THAT'S HELPING YOU GET THE JOB DONE FASTER?**

Not necessarily. There's no magic machine that cuts the time down. It's still the same process. I've been prolific since the first time you heard me. You might have heard [Little Brother's] *The Listening* first, but we recorded that at the same time I did [L.E.G.A.C.Y.'s] *Project Mayhem*. He'd come in and do a record and then Phonte and Pooh would do a record. Shoot, I still probably got six, seven albums nobody's ever heard, so I've been prolific.

**DO YOU STILL WORK ON A PC?**

It's the same set-up I've always had, except I was using Cool Edit and now I'm using Pro Tools to record. I know some people make beats in Reason on a Mac, but I'm still in Fruity Loops [now sold as FL Studio] on a PC. I say all the time, it don't matter what you

use. If you can't jump, Jordans aren't going to make you dunk. If you can't hear how a record is supposed to be chopped, or understand chord progressions, no machine is gonna make you know that. Whether you use Reason, Pro Tools, Acid Pro, Cakewalk, Fruity Loops, it all boils down to when you drop a needle on that record, man, and listen for that sample. Some cats got all the equipment in the world and skip over the best samples.

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT FRUITY LOOPS FOR SAMPLES?**

I liked Fruity Loops [initially] because it was cheap. MPCs was two grand when I was in college. In 1973, when they took all the money out of New York public schools for arts and music, kids [went to] the corner, set up turntables, and threw parties. I'm not gonna *not* make music because I can't afford an MP. I didn't choose Fruity Loops to sample—that's the only choice I had. If I'd have never said anything, nobody would've ever known. But the fact that it's a \$50 program that you download off Kazaa and I [won] a Grammy off of it fucks with some people, man. The Erykah Badu "Honey" joint is a Fruity Loops beat from five years ago. Hip-hop purists say, "He ain't no real beatmaker, he ain't working on an MP." These same motherfuckers ain't got no friends. I don't hear that from Just [Blaze or] Pete [Rock]. I ain't never heard that from Premier.

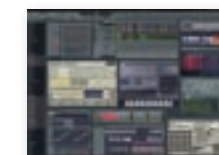
**DO YOU MOSTLY FIND YOURSELF MAKING MADE-TO-ORDER BEATS FOR ARTISTS, OR DO YOU GENERALLY BRING FINISHED BEATS AND HAVE THEM PICK AND CHOOSE?**

The Destiny's Child joints were made to order. Out of the 13 joints on this album with Buckshot, I'd say seven or eight are made-to-order beats. Same with the Murs records, Jean Grae. You know what happens? I'll make beats to order for an artist I'm doing an album with, and then go back and find old beats that fit those, so it sonically sounds like an album.

9th Wonder and Buckshot's *The Formula* is out this month on Duck Down. [9thwonder.com](http://9thwonder.com)



9th Wonder is best known for his work with the North Carolina trio Little Brother, who appeared on our cover in August 2005 (#89). To read the complete article, go to [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).



IN 9TH WONDER'S STUDIO: PRO TOOLS, FL STUDIO





## Artist Tips: Eliot Lipp

After the first few eerie tones echo forth on Eliot Lipp's newest album, *The Outside* (Mush), one gets the sense that Lipp's "outside" is not so much a sunny day spent at the park, but more an intruder's vantage point; a hidden place from which someone might peer in on some heavily guarded area. Rather than emulating summery birdsong, the synths on *The Outside* evoke a feeling of trespassing, with the tones pinging out a security grid in an '80s spy flick, or maybe soundtracking a space-shuttle launch to send Afrika Bambataa to the moon. Over the years, Lipp, the Brooklyn-based electro-hip-hop specialist has amassed a number of synths, and here he tells us which ones were most vital to crafting his fifth album. *Derek Grey*

### 1. ROLAND SH-101

The SH-101 is a pretty popular synth and it has a very familiar sound. I use it a lot for blips and bleeps, and also long sustaining notes. If you mess with the parameters enough, you can get it to sound like a piano, upright bass, or even a TB-303 (sorta). And it has a sequencer + CV. I started making "The Meaning" by programming a sequence on the 101 and triggering it with my TR-606.

### 2. MFB SYNTH 2

Just so you know, I bought mine way before Richard Devine or Telefon Tel Aviv got 'em (biters!). But seriously, this is a little secret weapon. It's an all-analog mono-synth that's homemade by some dude in Berlin. I used it on at least half of the tracks on *The Outside*, like for the really wet-sounding loop in "The Area." It has MIDI capability, and I filled it with dope-sounding sequences so I started using it live for a while. I would just sync the sequencer to my clock on Ableton Live but the little guy kept slipping out of tune halfway through my sets, so I gave it the boot. I still use it in the studio like crazy though.

### 3. OBERHEIM MATRIX 6

It's hard to find an affordable polyphonic analog synth that doesn't sound like piss. This one is awesome, though! It's great for Depeche Mode-style chords and really thick leads. It has MIDI, too, and you can adjust any parameter on it to get super-weird sounds. I made "Opening Ceremony" when I first got it. I was just playing one of the presets with mad reverb on it and I had to start recording it.

### 4. DOEPFER A-100 MODULAR

My pal John Hughes (a.k.a. Slicker, and head of Hefty Records) got me into this modular shit. I really don't know what I'm doing

with this thing, but it's super-fun and I used it on damn near every track on the album. The cool thing about building a modular system is that you can do it one piece at a time, and in the process you learn so much about how a synthesizer works. My favorite module so far is the Plan B Model 15 oscillator. I have two of them. The bass sounds retarded (check "Baby Tank" or the end of "The Area") and the FM modulation will make a typical patch sound insane!

### 5. KORG MS-20

This was the first real synth I ever bought. It's probably my favorite keyboard ever. The filter on it sounds cooler than any other filter ever! I play this a lot on all my albums. I used it for the bassline and the high-pitch lead on "See What It's About." I got a custom case for mine and I tour with it sometimes, but it's getting pretty scary now that they are worth like \$2000 or something.

[eliotlipp.net](http://eliotlipp.net)



We first found out about Eliot Lipp's love of synthesizers in #95, around the release of his *Tacoma Mockingbird LP*. To read the complete article, go to [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).

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## SQUEEZE PLAY

### LOGITECH SQUEEZEBOX DUET MUSIC-STREAMING SYSTEM

Yes, we all have tons of music these days. But actually accessing your meticulously organized, ranked-and-rated 80-plus GB collection is another story. Your computer and your various stereos aren't usually in the same place, which provides something of a logistical hurdle.

Enter Logitech's Squeezebox Duet, the latest in the company's line of solutions to this 21st-century problem. Essentially, it consists of a WiFi remote that connects to your wireless network and streams all of the music to a little black box that plugs into your stereo. You set the remote to access certain folders of music on your hard drive, and to connect to various internet music services with your accounts.

The Duet allows for an amazing amount of versatility and convenience, and falls in the middle of the price spectrum (Apple's iTunes is \$100, while the Sonos Digital Music System runs between \$700 and \$1000). Unlike iTunes, Duet comes with the aforementioned (and excellent) wireless color-screen remote, and is also compatible with virtually all (non-DRM) audio-file

formats: music files from your home Mac or Windows machines, along with PC-free internet radio, podcasts, and music services including Rhapsody, Slacker, and Pandora. It's more of a chore to set up than iTunes (which is more-or-less plug-and-play), but the ability to not have to get up and use your computer every time you want to change your music goes a long way.

Like the Sonos unit, the Squeezebox is even expandable to multiple rooms, in which you're able actually play different music simultaneously (you can purchase extra receivers and/or remotes). While we should say that the initial setup difficulties had us wanting to squeeze our Squeezebox into a million pieces (after several hours of headaches, this was eventually fixed by simply resetting our router), once set up, the system worked perfectly. If you've got the cash, the Squeezebox Duet is impressively intuitive, and one of the best ways to access the music motherlode. *Evan Shamoon*

MSRP: \$399; logitech.com



### FUTURE RETRO XS ANALOG SYNTHESIZER

**We might just have the next MS-20 on our hands, here.**

The XS is Future Retro's new semi-modular analog synth with a character similar to everyone's favorite old beast from Korg. With over 46 controls, the monophonic XS has so many routing possibilities that simply calling it a "synth" seems a grave injustice. Seven inputs and 11 outputs means you can use the XS along with guitars, vocals, and other CV-based modules for maximum weirdness. You can also use it as a standalone synth, in which case the XS is a simple machine: two oscillators, one multimode filter, and a dedicated LFO. However, like the MS-20, the secret is to take advantage of the routing capabilities (i.e. running the signal back into itself for distortion effects). If you've ever wanted to delve into modular synthesis, the XS is a fantastic place to start. *Brandon Ivers*

MSRP: \$1,299; future-retro.com



### ULTRASONNE HFI-780 HEADPHONES

As manufacturers build on advanced diaphragms and damping, it's less an open-and-shut case what makes an open or closed can. Traditionally, open headphones are considered more transparent, while closed headphones can be prone to darker clouds of bass and flashes of sibilance. But with Ultrasone's new HFI-780s, the gap narrows, as extended but not exaggerated frequencies make for an engrossingly wide soundstage. These efficient headphones show synergy with rhythmic computer-tuned compositions, with a nervier than neutral midrange and taut bass that radiates impact. Given a healthy burn-in period, these headphones offer impressive imaging and critical response (they provide clean sources/amping to avoid fatigue from bright transients or bloated punch). Sporting circumaural enclosures with tight clamp, there's isolation aplenty, enough for use in recording sessions, sound booths, or even on the subway. The aluminum gilding isn't inconspicuous, but **you'll be too involved listening to notice errant stares.** *Tony Ware*

MSRP: \$249; ultrasoneusa.com

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**SONAR 7 POWER! TUTORIAL GUIDE**

Cakewalk's Sonar has grown from a straightforward editor into a complex megasuite of composing, recording, and mixing tools, rocking everything from primitive drum loops up to full-fledged surround-sound mixes in v.7. The included manual will get you started, but this massive suite begs an exhaustive, reference-shelf-quality tome, and Course Technology's **Sonar 7 Power! delivers the goods** on every nook and cranny of every menu in the program. Scott Garrigus' clearly written tutorials lean on easy-to-follow bullet-point charts and copious screenshots, building a logical progression that will bring you from n00b to mixmaster with ease. Sure, there are online tutorials available, but how else can you learn how to rock the subtleties of the V-Vocal voice processor from the comfort of the couch? *Rob Geary*  
MSRP \$39.99; courseptr.com



**BLUE SNOWFLAKE USB MICROPHONE**

When we record last-minute voice-overs for *XLR8R TV*, we're usually left plugging a lapel mic into a video camera or some other similarly complex process involving too many cords and wireless devices. Not any more. When we first checked out the Snowflake at NAMM this January, we were immediately smitten with its compact form and ease of use. It folds away into a tiny little unit, and expands (into its own enclosed micstand) in less than a second for super-easy plug-and-play action. Sure it's no \$1000 Shure mic, but for simple .wav recording or podcasting, it more than does the trick. **And at \$60, it's the kind of thing we can't justify not having around the office.** *Ken Taylor*  
MSRP: \$59; bluemic.com



**RICHARD DEVINE: THE ELECTRONIC MANUSCRIPT SAMPLE COLLECTION**

Richard Devine is everywhere these days—doing sound design for mega-hit videogames, producing brain-assaulting records, and, most recently, getting busy on this rather pretentiously titled sample collection. It's a two-CD, 24-bit royalty-free package, and **full of all the sorts of glitchy insanity you'd expect.** There's plenty here to work with, including (mostly non-) drum loops, lush synth sounds, atmospheric noises, and single hits—and the quality is superb. It's not all hard on the ears; some of the samples are actually quite melodic, and a pretty versatile fit in terms of musical styles. Like the other titles in Sony's Premium Collection, the set is also extremely well produced—the packaging and liner notes are all top-notch, and include videos of the elaborate recording process. *Evan Shamoan*  
MSRP: \$99; sonycreativesoftware.com



**HELIO MYSTO MULTIMEDIA DEVICE**

Helio's new Mysto device is a slightly slimmer, lighter version of their past slider handsets. Its smooth sliding mechanism and screen design are pretty flashy, but I immediately discovered its almost out-of-control sensitivity when it came to the control surface. No sooner had I started up the camera function and the unit was clicking away (simply because I was trying to get a better grip on the phone itself). Trying to exit the function seemed impossibly unintuitive, and I practically had to power the phone down before I could get it back to call mode. Once there, calls were simple to dial (and sounded clear enough), but with no easy way to hang up (the screen went black and there's no obvious "end call" button), I was left holding the phone—literally. And I won't even get started on the "GPS" function. **Thumbs up on the design, but thumbs down on this user interface.** *Derek Grey*  
MSRP: \$99 (with Sprint plan); helio.com

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## CAREER CRIMINAL

A ride through the controversial history of *Grand Theft Auto*, Rockstar's compelling car chase thriller.

WORDS RYAN RAYHILL



The game was originally called *Race-N-Chase*. Sounds innocuous enough, no? Yet it would eventually become *Grand Theft Auto*, the infamous driving game whose over-the-top violence and sardonic wit would make it one of the most loved (and reviled) videogame series of all time. Having celebrated its 10th anniversary last year, the franchise has just released its biggest *GTA* yet, *Grand Theft Auto IV*. *XLR8R* takes a look at the long, bullet-riddled ride the series took to get here.

### **Grand Theft Auto (1997; PC, PlayStation)**

Devised by DMA Designs, the same guys that created cutesy hits like *Lemmings* and *Uniracers*, the first *Grand Theft Auto* was a 2D, bird's-eye-view title that, aesthetics aside, set the template for every game in the series after it. As a low-level thug, you claw your way to the top of a criminal empire in a non-linear, open-city environment that allows for all manner of mayhem, most notably the ability to take control of almost every vehicle in the game at will. The radio-station element that would become a popular staple of the series was present here but on a much smaller scale. There were no "known" artists, and on the PlayStation version you only got one station per car. Despite middling reviews and the industry's obsession with 3D games at the time, *GTA*'s freedom and mature themes made it a hit, setting the stage for things to come.

**Music Notes:** Music producer Craig Conner recorded the main theme, "Gangster Friday," under the moniker Slumpussy.

### **Grand Theft Auto: London 1969 (1999; PC, PlayStation)**

An expansion to the original, and the first *GTA* offering from the newly formed Rockstar Games, *1969* took players back to London (the only real-world setting in the series) in the swingin' '60s, with lots of Cockney talk and period vehicles. An expansion to the expansion, *London 1961*, was released as a free PC-only download a few months later.

### **Grand Theft Auto 2 (1999; PC, PlayStation)**

Similar to the first game in almost every way, with a few notable changes: a different time of day, gang affiliations, and most importantly, some semblance of a story.

### **Grand Theft Auto III (2001; PlayStation 2)**

*Grand Theft Auto III* took the series into a full-fledged 3D world, giving players *carte blanche* to do almost anything. It's widely credited not only with launching an entire genre of mature, sandbox-style games but also propelling sales of the PlayStation 2, with Sony signing a two-year exclusivity deal with Rockstar. Everything from weather effects to celebrities were added to lend even more gravitas to the gameplay and narrative. With the exception of perhaps *Super Mario 64*, no game since has had such an impact on the entire industry in terms of design, production values, or controversy—due to the virtual bloodshed and implied sex. While the violence of the 2D *GTA* games had been addressed previously, the much more realistic tone of *GTA3* sent the morally upright into a downright tizzy, ensuring it would sell millions for years to come.

### **Grand Theft Auto: Vice City (2002; PlayStation 2)**

Modeled after *Scarface* and *Miami Vice*, *Vice City* took players to a highly stylized, Miami-esque world set in the coke-crazy '80s, with even more celebrity voice talent and vehicles to jack. Though the radio-station feature was heavily expanded in *III*, *Vice City* was the first to really push the music angle further, with major '80s artists such as Blondie, Kate Bush, Judas Priest, and Michael Jackson contributing to the soundtrack.

**Music Notes:** As a nod to *Miami Vice*, Jan Hammer's "Crockett's Theme" appears on the Emotion 98.3 radio station.

### **Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (2004; PlayStation 2)**

Grander in scale than *III* and *Vice City*, *San Andreas* follows the 1994 adventures of gangsta Carl Johnson as he traverses three cities resembling San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas. While structured similarly to previous titles, *San Andreas* improved on its predecessors in every single way, and has become the most successful videogame ever. It also has the dubious distinction of being recalled for a sex scene (from the mini-game *Hot Coffee*, where CJ bangs his multiple girlfriends) that was never meant to be seen but was discovered by hackers.

**Music Notes:** Driving through the Hollywood Hills at dusk as Depeche Mode's "Personal Jesus" kicked in gave us a particularly tingly boner.

### **Grand Theft Auto IV (2008; Xbox 360, PlayStation 3)**

This month's *GTAIV* represents the true follow-up to *GTAIII* as well as the first game in the series to hit the Xbox 360 and PS3. It follows the adventures of an Eastern European thug who comes to America in an attempt to make good but who falls into the Liberty City (read: NYC) underworld. Naturally, *GTAIV* takes full advantage of the new consoles' power, filling every virtual square inch of space with stunning visuals and lifelike characters. After years of fans begging for it, online multiplayer finally finds its way to a *GTA* game, here with 15 different modes. The Xbox 360 version will even see exclusive downloadable content available before year's end. Does this portend a *GTA* MMO in the future? While the logistics of regulating a bunch of yahoos running around shooting each other online is mind-boggling, Rockstar President Sam Houser called the proposition "very compelling."

**Music Notes:** In addition to Iggy Pop and Green Lantern appearing as DJs, NYC house legend François K. gets his very own station.



*XLR8R*'s first Videogames section appeared in January/February '98 (#29) where we reviewed *Ghost in the Shell*, *Carmageddon*, and *Parappa the Rapper*.

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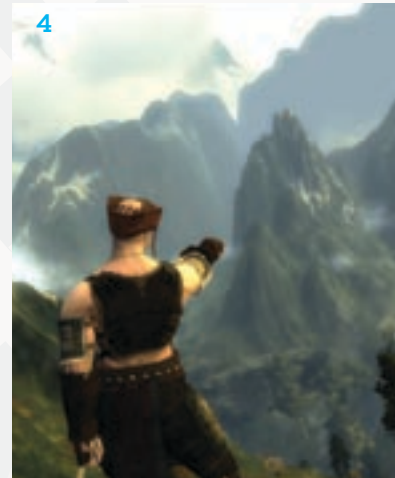




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XLR8R picks the hottest videogames and gear of the month.

WORDS RYAN RAYHILL



It's May. Beer and BBQ are awesome. Let's do this!

Of all the summer movies that have ended with the word "man" over the years we are thus far most excited about this month's *Iron Man* (keep in mind that July's Batman movie is in fact titled *The Dark Knight* and as such is not in contention). If you can't get enough of Ol' Shellhead at the theater, which is likely, then bring the alcoholic, heart-troubled playboy-cum-superhero home with *Iron Man* (Sega; Xbox 360, PS3, Wii). The movie's videogame alter ego kicks as much ass as its silver-screen counterpart with even more amazing visuals, massive explosions, and... Robert Downey Jr.

Speaking of blowing stuff up real good, *Blast Works: Build, Trade, Destroy* (Majesco; Wii) takes mass destruction and gives it a wild, addictive twist. Patrol the skies of a world made of trippy geometric shapes (think *Tron*) in an airship constructed entirely out of blocks. As you blow enemies into several pieces you can then absorb their various polygons to enhance your own shape—this means a thousand different ways to outfit your vehicle and unleash even more devastation. Fun!

A couple years back, Steven Spielberg announced he was getting into the videogame business and visions of aliens, dinosaurs, and *Schindler's List* danced in our heads. Smartly, Spielberg and his cronies eschewed any of his usual epic shtick for the family-friendly and—

dare we say—awesome *Boom Blox* (EA; Wii). Made specifically for the Wii's controls, *Boom Blox* is at heart a puzzle game that allows for the construction, and subsequent destruction, of towers made of over 20 types of blocks, each with their own properties (such as the ability to explode). With realistic physics, hundreds of levels, and the ability to construct your own puzzles and share them online, *Boom Blox* will undoubtedly afford Spielberg another gold toilet in his floating diamond castle.

Let's go three for three on the "block" theme here, shall we? To celebrate *Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, *LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures* (LucasArts; Xbox 360, PS2, PS3, Wii) takes the first three *Indiana Jones* films and transports them to a LEGO world that allows for much more tongue-in-cheek humor and enables you to play as almost any character from the Indie universe—from Mola Ram to the pureed German mechanic (each with their own set of abilities). Of course, you can play as the man himself, complete with whip and fedora, however all Nazi references have been removed and replaced instead with an "anonymous genocidal, occultist, trenchcoat-wearing master race." Whatevs, bro. As long as we get to melt their little LEGO faces with the Ark, we're cool.

It's a stone-cold fact that most massively multiplayer online games not named *World of Warcraft* fail miserably. However, poor odds have never stopped Conan the Barbarian from

overcoming certain defeat and driving a broadsword deep into his enemies' domes, even at the age of 76. Closely following the lore set forth by original author Robert E. Howard, *Age of Conan: Hyborian Adventures* (Eidos; Xbox 360, PC) promises to be more combat-oriented than the "grind" of other MMORPGs, with vast amounts of customization and eye candy to keep you glued to your monitor. So believe us when we say that *Age of Conan* is the real badass deal for true heads. And if you do not listen, den to Hell vit you!

For those more interested in swatting at balls than movie heroes, blocks, or bloodthirsty pagans, *Top Spin 3* (2K; Xbox 360, PS3, Wii) finally arrives to quell your yearning for summer-time tennis action. An impressive roster of recent stars such as Andy Roddick and Maria Sharapova join legends like Bjorn Borg and Monica Seles, who all lend their likenesses and stats to the game for the most visually and physically satisfying tennis experience yet. "Create-a-character" mode lets you make your own player that you can take online and use to diligently serve fools. Get it? SERVE! It's a tennis game! Never mind. Dick.

1. TOP SPIN 3
2. BLAST WORKS: BUILD, TRADE DESTROY
3. BOOM BLOX
4. AGE OF CONAN: HYBORIAN ADVENTURES

 Catch the weekly Loading... column at [XLR8R.com/news](http://XLR8R.com/news).

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## VIS-ED NATHAN JUREVICIUS

Vinyl toys get the naughty-but-nice treatment from a young-at-heart Aussie.

LEFT:  
*The Owl Queen*  
(pen and ink), exclusive  
for XLR8R Vis-Ed, 2008

Nathan Jurevicius, 34, has an imaginary friend, Andrew, who he's been chilling with since pre-school. No wonder he wound up designing vinyl toys for a living.

Born in Melbourne to an Australian mother and Lithuanian-Latvian father, Jurevicius studied design and illustration at the University of South Australia. He then began freelancing full-time as an editorial artist, simultaneously working on personal online projects. One fateful night in 2001, he got a call from Hong Kong-based toy producers Flying Cat, who wondered if he might like to take his illustrations to the third dimension. He thus embarked on a fruitful toy-making career, gaining renown amongst kids and serious collectors alike.

Jurevicius' toys recall everything from Tim Burton films to Japanese prints, early Disney animation to the futurism inherent in '60s interior design. His signature character, Scarygirl, is at once adorable and deformed, colorful and drab. Based partially on his daughter, Scarygirl was abandoned by her parents as a baby, raised by a mop-topped octopus named Blister, and guided by Bunniguru, an oracular rabbit. This sort of fractured-fairytale sensibility shows up in all Jurevicius' work, whether it's toys, paintings, or prints.

Living in Toronto with his family since 2004, Jurevicius is currently working on expanding the Scarygirl universe with a graphic novel and an online game. He is also preparing for his first L.A. show, which will be mounted next January at Gallery 1988, and is hard at work creating a super-secret gigantic toy.

[nathanj.com.au](http://nathanj.com.au)







ABOVE:  
(left to right) *City Park Walk*, *Yellow Onion Band*, *Dr. Maybee's Lab*

**What is the process of designing a toy like?**

The initial designing and sketching process for toys (and any project) is the best part for me. It all begins with conceptual sketches and turnarounds. From here, it is accessed by the factory to see how feasible it is to build, and then we go into the sculpting process/testing (which is being done more and more with 3D software). As I'm sketching, there's a back-story developing simultaneously as to how [the piece] fits into my overall

Scarygirl story arc (if I'm designing for that series). Sometimes there's a locked-down, preconceived idea, but generally I like to keep various options open.

**What's the coolest thing about making vinyl toys? What is the hardest thing?**

The coolest thing is thinking up the concept and seeing the first stage of production. The hardest is properly communicating the little details required for some figures.

**How did your color palette develop?**

It sort of goes in cycles. Every few years I go darker/moodier and then come back to more intense, almost fluorescent colors. Some of this is inspired by Eastern European paintings and children's books that came out in the '70s. [Joan] Miró is also an influence on me, as well as religious iconic art that uses a lot of bright, flat colors combined with more subtle backgrounds.

**What is your favorite color, and why?**

It changes, but currently I'm a little bit addicted to Winsor and Newton's carmine, crimson, and canary yellow inks.

**Do you feel differently about your paintings, drawings, and comics than you do about your toys?**

I'm always feeling like I'm still learning on the job with all these mediums so I tend not to get overly critical if something doesn't turn out exact. There's possibly

more pressure on the toy side of things as it's usually other peoples' money I'm playing with, and it's hard to control exactly how the final product will be.

**How do you feel about working with pre-existing toy forms like Qees or Dunnys?**

I did a lot of crossover pre-existing toy projects in the early days with Toy2R, Red Magic, and others and tend to avoid getting involved now. That being said, I've always had a soft spot for Medicom's

Bearbricks/Kubricks and will do the occasional collaboration.

**What artist has inspired you most? What toy designer has inspired you most?**

Have always loved Picasso, Miró, and [William] Dobell, though probably my dad's sculpture and pottery has been the biggest influence on me from a young age. Yoshitomo Nara's toy and product design is something I admire greatly.

ABOVE:  
(clockwise from bottom left) *MTV Fauna* (digital sculpt for resin sculpture series produced by MTV Canada/Bigshottoyworks), *Benni* and *Naal* (limited-edition vinyl toys produced by Strangecco)





ABOVE:  
*War Machine*

**What artists would you like to collaborate with in the future?**

Could be fun to do something with architect Toyo Ito or Michel Gondry.

**Does your Australian upbringing influence your work?**

Up until I was an early teen, my father and grandparents only spoke Latvian to each other (sadly, I didn't learn the language) and their home was very much old-school Baltic in style. They were a big influence on my artwork and attitude. That being

said, my mother's side are all super-Aussie and have a unique perspective on life, which I also love.

**What was your favorite toy to play with as a child?**

Lego... Oh, and local football team-branded cheap YoYos.

**What is your favorite animal?**

Cats are my favorite—relaxing to be with and they have great styling!

**What medium would you like to work in that you have never tried before?**

Neon-tube lighting. I would love to create some sort of giant character made up of neon lights all twisted together.... I may have to research this.

**What is your favorite toy that you've designed? Your favorite toy that someone else has designed?**

Possibly the Peleda wind-ups with Toy Tokyo or the Scarygirl City Folk with Kidrobot. The Eames plywood elephant is

very wonderful (but I don't own one).

**What scares you the most?**

Spiders and flying.

**What is your favorite scary movie?**

The soon to be released *Spiders On a Plane!* The *Omen* series and *Lost Boys* are also favorites.

**How do your kids feel about your work?**

The older they get, the more they appreciate what I'm doing. The work sometimes

hovers between the adult-child world and I see them viewing it with excitement and confusion (which is a good thing, in my opinion).

**What is your attitude about playing with vinyl toys?**

Depends on the nature of the toy. Some of them lend themselves to be more hands-on and exploratory, whereas others are purely statues/non-functional and are purposely designed to be an art piece. I'm open to both.

**What music do you listen to while you're working?**

I generally listen to a lot of podcasts and radio shows. Currently listening to John Safran on Sunday evenings and a bunch of books on tape.

**What is a development you would you like to see happen in the vinyl toy world?**

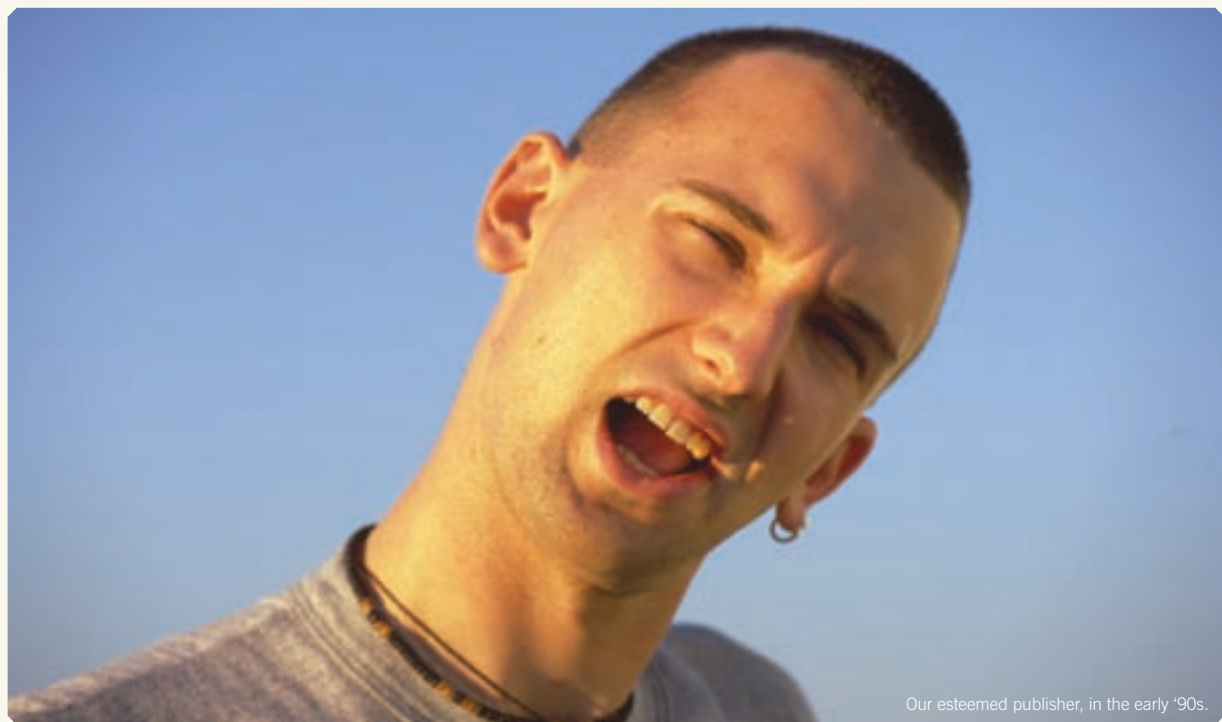
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## TBC: PLURred Vision

XLR8R publisher Andrew Smith waxes philosophical on 15 years of independent publishing.



Our esteemed publisher, in the early '90s.

**From our early days** of printing off of floppy discs at a Seattle Kinko's to navigating the online-publishing revolution, *XLR8R* has tried to keep it as real and as DIY as possible. For the occasion of our 15-year anniversary, we editors decided to throw our boss a few questions about how we got here. *Ken Taylor*

**XLR8R: Describe the cultural climate from which *XLR8R* emerged.**

Andrew Smith: Seattle in 1993 was on the downslope of grunge hype. It still had a lot of local flavor but it was starting to self-destruct because of the mainstream record deals that were getting signed. It had a good club culture—a lot of gay clubs that had been around for a long time—but it was a very small scene that hadn't changed since the late '70s/early '80s. When rave culture came along, it was a trainwreck of rock 'n' roll people, '80s club people (that felt like they should be holders of the holy grail of 4/4 music), and then all of these kids—from drug dealers to DJs to really bad graffiti artists—who all decided to get together and throw a rave.

**No hippie burn-outs?**

They were more like meth-addicted hippies. There was a lot of influence from California; the rave promoters down there threw parties up in Seattle with the same names. They brought up their DJs, like the Hardkiss Brothers. It was kind of like California was the filter for the U.K. scene (many artists moved from the U.K. to San Francisco and L.A.) and then we got a further-removed version from the California interpretation.

**So how did *XLR8R* start?**

I was the arts editor of the University of Washington *Daily*. I would take the newspaper car with a gaggle of photographers and we'd be at a rave 'til like 4 in the morning, doing this "special" on raves. We had an awesome time; a total abuse of resources. That was towards the end of my tenure as the editor, and by that point I had been introduced to all the promoters, knew all the DJs locally. For a while, the newspaper let me do *XLR8R* out of their offices, because I was paying them for the supplies and everything. But when the board of regents found out about it, they had to pull the plug and it moved to Kinko's.

**There was some sort of philosophy behind it for you, right?**

It got me really excited when I became a member of the rave community. There was the do-it-yourself aspect: a lot of young, motivated people creating businesses, producing things—the sorts of things you aren't really supposed to do until you're older or more experienced, but here they were just going for it. But I was also intoxicated with how illegal it was. The parties were illegal, the drugs were—and still are—illegal, the record releases were illegal (white labels with complete riffs of samples). It was the complete subculture; completely subverting the popular culture was a big part of what I was excited about—and still am.

**How would *XLR8R* be different if it started today?**

One of the greatest things you can do with any kind of media enterprise is go cross-platform: print, online, *XLR8R TV*. So I think if we started it now, it would first and foremost be a website and TV show, with the ability to leverage print expertise, events, and other stuff like that.

**What might you tell someone trying to start such a venture today?**

Regardless of the medium, they have to ask themselves, how hard are they willing to work? You've got to be willing to sacrifice your life; it becomes your life. That's the only way you're going to start something out of nothing. Also, have your own innovative approach. If you're gonna start something online, you need to stand out: Is it your editorial voice that stands out? Your graphic design? The functionality of what it is that you're creating? You've got to continually drive forward with new ideas and new ways of presenting your ideas. You can lock onto something that's successful and you can nail that niche, but if you don't continue to advance then you're not gonna last for that long.



Andrew Smith was born in Detroit and partially reared in Seattle before making S.F. his home. He enjoys Mountain Dew, banana-yellow bike jerseys, '70s dub, sci-fi novels, and fixing *XLR8R*'s testy old file server with his son, Jackson, and his Boston terrier, Larry Lovebone, in tow.

To hear the full audio version of this interview, visit [XLR8R.com/117extras](http://XLR8R.com/117extras).

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